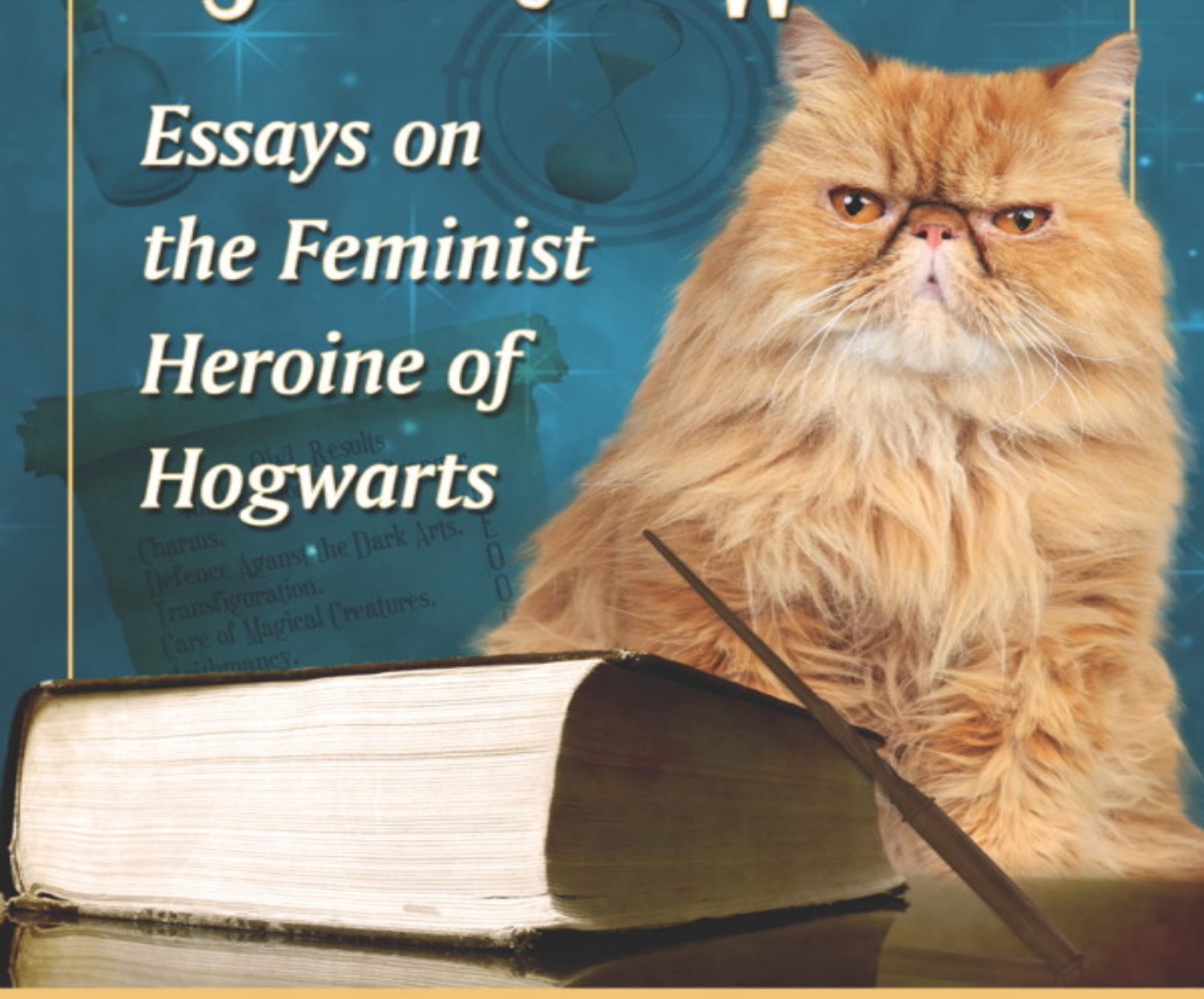
Hermione Granger Saves the World

Essays on the Feminist Heroine of Hogwarts



Edited by **Christopher E. Bell**

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For Megan, Olivia, and
real-life Hermiones everywhere

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

CHRISTOPHER E. BELL*

There are plenty of books that will tell you exactly why you cannot be a feminist.

This book is not one of them.

Those books like to think that if you're white, you can't be a feminist. If you've got money, you can't be a feminist. If you've settled down into motherhood and/or "domesticity," you can't be a feminist. If you're middle or upper class, you can't be a feminist. And, of course, if you're male, you can't possibly be a feminist.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are plenty of other books that would like you to stop using the term "feminism" altogether, mostly because the authors of those books don't know what feminism is, can't explain it and have never experienced it. The Rush Limbaughs of the world believe that feminists "have paid their dues. They've been married two or three times; they've had two or three abortions; they've done everything that feminism asked them to do. They have cut men out of their lives; they have devoted themselves to causes and careers" (MediaMatters 2008). Some go so far as to define feminism as:

> an aggressive counter-reaction intended to protect the threatened reproductive and sexual interests of middle-class, middle-aged women in a free sexual marketplace ... having a society base its morals and social structure upon the primitive reproductive urgings of one sex alone degrades women, degrades men, degrades civilization and, in fact, turns the western humanist world into nothing more than a "secular" and feminised version of an Islamic fundamentalist state under Sharia law [theantifeminist.com].

Let's be clear and blunt, right here at the outset: the position of each of these people is fundamentally flawed. On the one hand, one of the most legitimate arguments those that are critical of feminism use against feminists is that when feminists say "feminist" what they really mean is, "women who think like we do." Historically, feminism's tendency toward exclusionism has been one of its major weaknesses as an ideology. Some feminists just don't want the tent to be wide enough to cover people who may disagree with some of their tenets. On the other hand, one of the most legitimate arguments feminists use against those that claim to oppose feminism is that, when presented with a

list of things feminists believe, "opponents" often agree with the majority of feminist claims. It would appear that the truth is, no one much knows what feminism even is.

So before we go much farther, we need to answer some seemingly simple, yet incredibly complex, questions: what is this "feminism" thing? What is a feminist? Am I a feminist? Are you?

Let me take those questions a bit out of order. The answer to the third question is, "Yes." The answer to the fourth question is, "Probably. Let's find out."

To build a working definition so that we may answer the fourth question, a bit of history. Note that this is not intended to be an all-encompassing or thorough examination of feminist ideology. It has absolutely been simplified and generalized; think of it as a primer—one which necessarily invites disagreement, as we will come to see.

The term *feminism* encompasses a variety of theories, philosophies, and societal organizational structures across a multitude of Western societies. (One of the key concepts to get one's head around is the fact that there is no such thing as a monolithic definition of "feminism.") It is a term that both men and women have historically feared, because of its socially-coded negative connotations. Feminists are often portrayed in media as female extremists—"not about equal rights for women but about the feminization of the American male, an ideology that is anti-family and anti-father-and virtually guaranteed to bring about the wholesale destruction of the American family" (Howse 2010). Some people, in turn, call the feminist movement the "death of chivalry." This saying, among others, became an early method of undercutting the movement and upholding traditional, patriarchal social norms: by declaring the empowerment of women to be a threat (Fiano 2008). Because of this, "feminism" has become what we might call "a tainted term," usually taken out of original context, veiled instead by vague and inaccurate convolutions. Because of an ignorant, concerted campaign of propaganda directed at its core, feminism has become a social enigma. It is an ideology in constant need of clarification.

At its very base level, contrary to what some might have everyone believe, feminism does not intend to promote extreme female dominance over (or mere liberation from) men. The vast majority of feminist ideologies strive for what we might call *gender equilibrium*. The basis of feminism lies in social structures of power. Think of it as a scale, or more accurately, as a spectrum. On one side, there is matriarchal society, in which women hold the most power. This is a social structure occasionally seen among select Native American tribes and other world cultures. On the other side of the spectrum, there is patriarchal society, in which men hold the most power. The patriarchal social structure is dominant in most Western cultures. Directly in the middle,

between these polar opposite male/female social structures, is gender equilibrium, in which both males and females share equally in the blessings and the burdens of society. They maintain an equal amount of power. This equilibrium—and the struggle to achieve it—is what motivates feminism.

It is absolutely vital to understand that, contrary to popular belief, feminism is not exclusive to women's rights. It is only labeled as such because it was founded primarily in Western cultures, in which women have less power on the social spectrum. It makes sense, then, that a movement dedicated to assisting the social underdog in achieving equilibrium would necessarily take on that underdog's name for its cause. Hence, the women's movement for equilibrium is labeled *feminism*. If, one day, the situation was magically reversed, and men were the social underdogs within dominating matriarchal societies, then the label (and those truly committed philosophically to the cause) would conditionally change to *masculinism* (and *masculinists*), in keeping with the promotion of gender equilibrium. *Feminism* is a label forged from social circumstance.

That said, it is important to distinguish between the different perspectives of feminism, which, in contemporary scholarship, are often divided into waves. Each wave contains a distinct outlook on the pursuit of gender equilibrium within patriarchal society. The First Wave of feminism occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and is commonly associated with women's suffrage. It majorly concerned *de jure* sexism, which dealt with women's legal rights. A chief accomplishment of First Wave feminism was the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which allowed American women to vote. However, *de facto* sexism remained strong. Through *de facto* sexism, women were still discriminated against via traditional expectations of what roles women could or should occupy in society (Limbach 2009).

The Second Wave of feminism arose in the 1960s and 1970s and sought to combat *de facto* sexism. "Paid maternity leave, fair hiring practices, affordable childcare, equal pay (in theory), Title IX, access to family planning, illegalization of marital rape, 'no fault' divorce laws, and many other social improvements of the time are thanks to second wavers" (Limbach 2009). The Second Wave of feminism was limited, though, by its over-generalization of women. This wave concentrated mainly on heterosexual, middle class, Caucasian women. Other women who did not conform or belong to these categories were left as outsiders to a movement intending to benefit an entire gender, without effectively taking its diversity into consideration.

Third Wave feminism gained momentum as a result in the 1990s, and advocated for the women of various sexual orientations, classes, ethnicities and races. It shifted focus from an attempt to define a united, single entity of "woman" to identifying the diverse circumstances and conditions of "women." As Gwen Limbach (2009) asserts, "Also

within this wave is a consideration of the space for girls (pre-teen and adolescent) in our society as well as how popular culture influences girls and the world at large through portrayals of women, people of color, and gays." It is at this doorstep of Third Wave feminism, on the cusp of what might be termed "Postfeminism," that we find one Miss Hermione Jean Granger: freedom fighter, scholar, confidante and survivor—the brightest wizard in the Potterverse.

What's So Special About Hermione?

"Why would anyone write an entire book about Hermione Granger? She's just a character in a story."

However, let's not forget that J.K. Rowling holds a degree in French and Classics from the University of Exeter. In a series filled with historical and literary references, commentary about everything from slavery and race relations to the anti-intellectualism of conservatism and a nearly immortal villain who refers to himself as the Thief of Death (from the French *voleur de mort*), it is difficult to characterize any element of the series (much less one third of the main character—more on this later) as "just" anything.

Perhaps Sady Doyle (2011) sums it up best when she says that Harry Potter, because of his constant need for rescue and his "popular-yet-brooding jock" archetype, comes across as a "male damsel-in distress," and that, in fact, Hermione is the real hero of the story. She goes on to state:

> Harry is a parody of every cliché Rowling avoided with Hermione. Harry is not particularly bright or studious; he's provided with an endless supply of gifts and favors; he's the heir to no less than two huge fortunes; he's privileged above his fellow students, due to his fame for something he didn't actually do himself; he even seems to take credit for "Dumbledore's Army," which Hermione started. Of course this character is obnoxious. It's only by treating ourselves to the irritation caused by Harry that we can fully appreciate Hermione herself [Doyle 2011].

Why a book about Hermione? Simple. When I encounter someone that is struggling to understand what real-world, modern feminism means in contemporary Western society, I use Hermione Granger as an exemplar. Feminism, as previously shown, can be conceptually difficult to grasp, especially for young people and those for whom feminism has been misunderstood and demonized by popular media and political punditry.

Hermione Granger gets her name from a cadre of literary Hermiones. Names in the Potterverse mean something, from the aptly named Professor Sprout (who teaches the magical equivalent of botany) to Sirius Black, the animagus that can shape-shift into a giant black dog (whose name also happens to be that of "the Dog Star," the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major). The Greek Ἑρμιόνη was the female form of Hermes, messenger of the gods and patron of literature, poetry and invention. In Greek mythology, Hermione was the daughter of Menelaus, King of Sparta, and Helen of Troy, mentioned in book four of *The Odyssey* and immortalized by Euripides in his play *Andromache* and later by composer *Gioachino Rossini* in his opera *Ermione.* The French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully translates the name of Harmonia, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite and goddess of harmony and friendship, into "Hermione" in his opera *Cadmus et Hermione.* In the Bible, the daughter of Saint Philip the Deacon is named Hermione, and in the fifth book of the New Testament—*The Acts of the Apostles*—Hermione is referred to as a "prophetess." She is later martyred and becomes Saint Hermione of Ephesus in A.D. 117 In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare introduces Queen Hermione of Sicily, a smart and beautiful woman convicted of adultery under false pretenses who dies of grief, only to be miraculously brought back to life at the end of the play.[1]

The tenacity of the Greek Hermiones, the ability to see the connections of the future of Saint Hermione of Ephesus, and the intelligence of Queen Hermione of Sicily seem to have been passed down to Rowling's Ms. Granger. They form the foundation for the type of feminism Hermione displays throughout the series. For many young readers (and for a fair few adults, as well), both male and female, Hermione will be the first "real" feminist they ever experience. This claim is the basis for this volume, and a contentious claim it is.

For example, one of the major arguments of critics of Hermione as feminist model is a perception that she is fully invested not in her own struggles and her own adventures, but only as an "enabler of Harry and Ron's adventures" (Heilman 2003, 224). Because Hermione is often the sole person that develops a plan, but seldom the sole person that executes the plan, her knowledge and skills are seen as supplementary rather than primary (Heilman 224). However, this claim is misguided on two fronts. First, as rightly pointed out by Krunoslav Mikulan, Heilman's support for this claim is extracted without taking into consideration the significant development of Hermione's character over time (Mikulan 2009, 289). Heilman refers to a scene in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (hereafter *CoS*) (Rowling 1998) in which Hermione crafts the Polyjuice Potion—a key element in a plot by the main characters to spy on their rivals—only to find she has made a mistake on only her own serving of the potion, rendering her incapacitated for carrying out the plan (Heilman 224). She also refers to a later plot twist, in which Hermione has solved the crucial mystery leading to the climax of the

book, but is herself "petrified" and again incapacitated for participating in the final encounter (Heilman 224). Scenes such as these lead some critics to view Hermione as, at best, a "helpmate" working in support of traditional, patriarchal systems (Mayes-Elma cited Andrade 2008, 175). However, Hermione repeatedly proves herself (and her own agency) throughout the series: in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (hereafter *PoA*) (Rowling 1999), it is Hermione who not only provides the Time Turner (the hinge upon which the entire climax depends), but actively saves the life of Sirius Black by distracting the werewolf; in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (hereafter *OotP*) (Rowling 2003), it is Hermione who organizes Dumbledore's Army, figures out how to remove Dolores Umbridge from power and actively repels multiple Death Eaters in the Department of Mysteries; in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (hereafter *DH*) (Rowling 2007), Hermione saves the lives of both Harry and Ron on several occasions. Hermione is far from a "helpmate." Andrade astutely notes that, if one focuses only on *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (hereafter *SS*) (Rowling 1997), it is easy to see Hermione as "submissive to the patriarchal hegemony" (Andrade 177); however, clearly, as the series progresses, she is able to "claim her own feminist space" (Andrade 177) independent of traditional female "sidekick" status.

In fact, the second way in which the criticism of Hermione as supplemental is misguided is directly related to her status as "teammate." Hermione can be seen as supplemental only if one accepts the premise that, simply because his name happens to appear in the title, Harry Potter is the protagonist of this epic. I argue, rather strenuously, that Harry is not the protagonist—or, at the least, not the sole protagonist. In fact, it is proven, repeatedly, that on his own, Harry is often flatly incapable of success—sometimes to the point of utter ineptitude. It is the Trio as a whole—Harry, Ron and Hermione together—that is the protagonist of the tale, and each member of the Trio is essential, required even, to ultimately succeed. Does Harry eventually vanquish Voldemort? Certainly. But Harry does not live to see the final battle without his equally vital partners. In essence, throughout the series, the Trio functions as a sole entity—a classic trinity protagonist structure (Bell 2011). It is easy to see Harry as the main source of agency, because his role in the Trio is that of the body; he is the "do-er," the active engager, the one who carries out action. However, he is rarely the source of action; his ideas are hardly ever his own, and when they are, they are often abysmal failures. Ron, by contrast, fulfills the role of the heart, or perhaps even the soul; he is the emotional center of the team, by turns both courageous and cowardly. While much has been made of Hermione's propensity for bursting into tears and cowering in the face of danger (Heilman 2003; Dresang 2004), in truth, Ron's emotional outbursts, whimpering and crying are just as common and much more central to his character—Hermione's are incidental. They are not her defining characteristic. Hermione's essential characteristic, and her role within the Trio, is to act as the brain; she is the source of logic, knowledge and rational thinking. It is nearly always Hermione who

solves the puzzle, spots the clue, provides the insight or answers the question. Each member of the Trio—body, mind and soul—is important, elemental and necessary. Remove one, and the other two cannot properly function. This lesson is repeated by Rowling, over and over, in a variety of different ways: no one succeeds alone, and attempting to do so has dire consequences (Voldemort himself being the primary example, but Dumbledore's death is a direct result of his attempt to find the horcruxes on his own, Ron's mental breakdown as the sole wearer of the locket in *DH*, etc.). Our cultural predisposition to view the "do-er" as the central protagonist obfuscates the truth about the Harry Potter series: his name is on the book, but he is only one third of the protagonist. A brainless, soulless body cannot possibly win the day. It is an uncommon way to view the series, to be sure, but one that makes sense.

Another criticism of Hermione as feminist model is the aforementioned lack of consistency in defining feminism itself—feminist critics are often operating from their own personal definitions of "feminism," which may or may not mean the same thing to everyone. For example, Eliza Dresang (2004) asserts that feminist theory "takes as given" that Western society is inherently patriarchal and that women are not economically, socially or politically equal to men (Dresang 216). Further, she states that feminism intrinsically promotes the rights of women to pursue interests "unfettered or undeterred by the patriarchal structure" (Dresang 216), and defines the ultimate purpose of feminism as eliminating inequity for women and "improve[ing] the lot of everyone" (Dresang 216). However, she later goes on to dismiss Hermione as "the antithesis of a strong female" and claims Hermione is "not a feminist model for engagement in sisterhood" (Dresang 241) because she spends most of her time and energy with boys rather than with (and, more importantly, for) girls. For Dresang, participation in "the community of women" is "a fundamental feminist characteristic" (Dresang 240), although she does later admit that this is a decidedly 19th/early 20th century description of liberal feminism (Dresang 241). Given this narrow view of liberal feminism, Dresang may be right that Hermione is not a good feminist model. However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that, in fact, a more modern view of feminism—a Postfeminism, if you will—advocates a complete rejection of and disregard for many traditional (i.e., Second Wave) components of feminism altogether, and that working toward her own sense of centrality and her own societal power is more important than participation in "sisterhood" on a wider scale. This is, categorically, not to say that Hermione functions without community. Indeed, as illustrated in the essay "Is Hermione Granger the *Real* Chosen One?," Hermione's ability to construct and maintain community is one of her strongest (and most feminist) abilities. However, hers is a brand of feminism that specifically seeks to include men in the process—Hermione's feminism is infectious, and creates other feminists in its wake (Ron and Harry chief among them, as demonstrated in "*Alohomora!* Unlocking Hermione's Femininism"). It is

what is so postfeminist about Hermione; her community isn't pigeonholed to "sisterhood"—it requires both genders to advance its ideals.

This view of feminism is not localized simply to *Harry Potter*; it is a reflection of trends in popular culture as a whole toward an incorporation of Third Wave feminist philosophy into the dominant hegemonic paradigm. As Banet-Wiser (2004) points out,

> the rhetoric of girl power has found currency in almost every realm of contemporary children's popular culture. In the mid–1990s, The Spice Girls, a manufactured, pop-music girl-group, adopted "Girl Power!" as their motto. And, at the same time, the alternative internet community the Riot Grrrls incorporated girl power ideology in their efforts to construct a new kind of feminist politics. T-shirts emblazoned with "Girls Kick Ass!" and "Girls Rule!" became hot new items for both high-school and elementary school girls [Banet-Wiser 120].

The sensibilities of this "new" rhetoric of Third Wave/Postfeminism—particularly of the type of "girlie" feminism Hermione Granger so often embodies—are prevalent and pervasive throughout the character arcs of several major *Harry Potter* characters, including Ginny Weasley, Luna Lovegood and Cho Chang. The juxtaposition of the ultra-feminine and overt displays of power reflect the desire of Girlie feminists to "reclaim the word 'girl' to address what they [see] as the anti-feminine, anti-joy features of the second wave. For them, wearing pink, using nail polish, and celebrating pretty power make feminism fun" (Mann and Huffman 2005, 73). The entirety of the "girl power" movement of the late 90s, into which *Harry Potter* made its initial debut, symbolizes this rejection of the claims of Second Wave feminism that the only way to be a "real feminist" was to completely rebuff so-called patriarchal femininity. Girlie feminism embraced the notion that it was possible to be fiercely powerful and feminine at the same time (Shugart, et al. 2001), and Hermione serves as Girlie feminism's chief ambassador in the Potterverse. She is symbolic of those who refuse to accept femininity and feminism as arbitrary antonyms.

One final criticism of Hermione stems directly from the film versions of the series, and the embodiment of Hermione Granger in Emma Watson.

> Emma Watson's Hermione has turned out disappointingly. It's not Watson's fault she grew up so pretty, so poised, with such luscious tresses. But someone ought to have reminded the filmmakers that in this boy-centric universe, Hermione is the nerdy-wonky cutie with whom all girls, hot and not, could identify. Now she's just another cover girl [Edelstein 2009].

A quick search of "Emma Watson is too pretty to play Hermione" pulled up, at the time of this writing, 421,000 results. Of course, no one has seriously suggested Daniel Radcliffe is too handsome to play Harry Potter, so there is a disturbing amount of sexist undercurrent to the discussion. To be fair, Emma Watson is beautiful, and not in some subjective, trite, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" way. She is empirically beautiful by contemporary Western standards of beauty. While some may argue that beauty inherently resists empiricism, I disagree. There most certainly is a prescribed didacticism of contemporary Western media when it comes to female attractiveness: youth, body type, height, eye width and shape, a certain delicateness—all easily identifiable markers of Western standards of beauty. Emma Watson possesses them all. She is not subjectively beautiful; she is objectively beautiful. But should that have disqualified her from playing Hermione Granger?

First, when Watson was cast, she was nine years old, and began filming at ten. At that age, it would have been nearly impossible to predict the course her looks would take as she grew older. She was cute, to be sure, but cuteness can fade rather quickly. Watson's stunningly good looks are, as far as Warner Brothers is concerned, a happy accident.

Secondly, the interesting fact of the matter is that, aside from the first description of Hermione given in *SS*, we hardly know anything at all about how she looks. At no point does Rowling attach any sort of descriptors at all to the character, other than briefly stating that she had bushy hair and large front teeth as an 11-year-old child, and that, during the Yule Ball at 14 years of age, in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (hereafter *GoF*), she had slicked her hair back and put on a pretty dress. The same sort of description is given of Hermione at the age of 18, at the wedding of Bill Weasley and Fleur Delacour in *DH*. Beyond that, Rowling doesn't make reference to Hermione's looks—a conscious decision, no doubt, because Hermione's looks aren't really the point. Her abilities are. Hermione of the novels could be supermodel gorgeous, for all we know. Rowling never says. (And this is not isolated to Hermione—besides his scar, the color and style of his glasses, his mop of unkempt hair and the color of his eyes, Rowling really never tells us what Harry looks like, either. Nor Ron, for that matter. We know he turns out to be fairly tall, and he has red hair. That's about it.) Rowling sketches these descriptions, and the reader fills in the details. So, really, is it Emma Watson's fault that readers immediately equated Hermione's intelligence ("nerdy-wonky"ness) with unattractiveness (or, at the very least, a plainness)? That says vastly more about the average reader than it does about Watson, Hermione or Rowling.

For her own part, Emma Watson has been extremely vocal about Hermione's more Postfeminist attributes. In interviews, she has emphatically stated that Hermione is not some sidekick, but a spellcaster with abilities that are comparable and/or superior to that of the titular character:

> Jo wrote this incredible female role. I think unprecedented in the fact that she is not just an equal to the boys but actually, in some respects, you can see that she's a stronger fighter, a stronger witch ... that just doesn't happen in blockbuster movies, the women just tend to be these pretty sidekicks—Hermione isn't that at all [Reynolds 2011].

Watson also has taken real pride in her characterization of Hermione, relating that, "[she] feel[s] like young girls are sold this idea that they have to be this princess and be all delicate and fragile. It's bull[shit]. [Watson] identified much more with being a warrior and being a fighter" (Patalano 2011). This spirit is the very essence of Postfeminism—the beautiful, waifish pixie that is Emma Watson identifying not with those "girlier" aspects of Hermione, but with the rough-and-tumble combatant aspects: an embracing of both the traditionally feminine and the traditionally masculine simultaneously.

The dividing line between where Emma Watson ends and Hermione Granger begins is as blurry as one might expect when an actress originates a role on film and develops that character over the course of seven movies. The two become intertwined in a way that can only really happen in serialized films—Han Solo is, in many ways, Harrison Ford, despite the facts that Ford has starred in an amazing number of films and that Han Solo's character lived on in novelizations after the first trilogy of *Star Wars* films was complete. It is difficult to imagine Han Solo existing outside of Harrison Ford; Ford infects the Solo character, even in novels. Emma Watson, for better or worse, is Hermione Granger in a very real way; Watson herself has stated, "There is so much of me in Hermione that I couldn't tell the difference. Her earnestness. Her energy. Her desire to do the right thing. Her determination. She and I both would always speak our mind" (Vincent 2011). While there may still exist some version of Hermione Granger that lives in the head of a reader of the novels who has never seen the films, once a reader has consumed all eight films, it would be difficult not to, even if just in some small way, replace the original Hermione that inhabited the reader's mind with an Hermione/Emma hybrid. That Hermione/Emma hybrid is essentially, intrinsically feminist. As Watson herself has stated, "I think women are scared of feeling powerful and strong and brave, and I think that's something they've got to embrace" (Hasty, 2011).

Yes, in this light, there is some measure of validity to criticisms of Hermione's behaviors and mannerisms in *SS* and *CoS*, but I contend that Rowling begins Hermione's character in this position purposefully: if a character is going to grow over the course of the series, the place the character begins must be very far away from the place the author intends the character to go. Hermione shrieks, bawls and hides from trolls in *SS* so that when she stands face to face with Bellatrix LeStrange in *DH* and takes the worst

torture the second darkest wizard in the world can dish out, it means something. She must begin in a state of a sort of "protofeminism," or rather, an embryotic feminism, so that she can eventually blossom into full-fledged Third Wave feminism by *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (hereafter GoF) and be strengthened into Postfeminism by series' end: activist, powerful and full of agency, yet feminine, romantic and stylish—a new kind of feminism for a new kind of girl. For Hermione Granger (and an entire league of emerging young women), "feminism is like fluoride. [They] scarcely notice that [they] have it—it's simply in the water" (Baumgardner and Richards 17).

So, dear reader, whether you are white, brown, black or otherwise, old or young, wealthy or not so much, heterosexual, homosexual, neither or somewhere between, female or even male, there is room for you under this particular tent of feminism. If you are at all interested in the achievement of gender equilibrium, in which men and women can equally enjoy the advantages and encumbrances of Western society, then you are very much welcome to call yourself a feminist. Hermione Granger will be your guide through one example of what our conception of feminism really looks like.

The first section of this collection contains essays that serve as an entrée to Hermione as a feminist character; they are the road map for the rest of the collection. The first piece, by Julie Alexander, is an exploration into Hermione as filmic icon, paying particular attention to Emma Watson and her role in defining Hermione, for better or worse. Atje Gercama links Hermione to a feminist ethic of care and illustrates how Hermione's world view renders the entire series a quest for justice. Finally, Elizabeth de la Torre's piece shows how Hermione's racial status within the Wizarding World leads specifically to her own sense of feminist ethics.

The remainder of the volume is broken up into four short sections, each dealing with a different aspect of Hermione's character as it relates to her feminist ideals. Hermione as Woman presents two visions of Hermione's relationship to femininity. Alexandra Hidalgo places both Hermione Granger and Emma Watson into a larger feminist framework of maternal power, the balance between professional and personal fulfillment, and motherly sacrifice. This is followed by an essay by Sarah Margaret Kniesler in which the androgyny of Hermione's defining characteristics is used in order to educate her peers, particularly Ron, about the principles of feminism.

Hermione as Scholar begins with Tara Foster's piece, introducing us to the relationship between Hermione's intellectual gifts and feminism. Li Cornfeld's intriguing essay approaches Hermione's feminism through the lens of language, demonstrating how linguistic power translates into social agency.

Hermione as Warrior deals specifically with Hermione as front-line fighter against Voldemort. In Helen Berents' piece, Hermione's role as a freedom fighter is juxtaposed with real-world child soldiers in conflicts, particularly in Africa. Then, Christine Klingbiel attempts to redefine the female superhero through Hermione Granger, challenging the current paradigm of normativity within the superhero genre.

The final section of the book, Hermione as Activist, combines William V. Thompson's exploration of Hermione as a social activist and the "voice of reason" within the Trio with Todd S. Waters' questioning of whether Hermione is the real foil to Voldemort in his spectacular essay, utilizing coordination theory to explain Hermione's true power.

In the end, my hope is that these essays provide not only a sense of enjoyment for the reader, but also a good deal of concrete examples of Third Wave feminism and Postfeminism. In this, perhaps this collection will demystify and recontextualize feminism, proving to the reader that regardless of race, class, geographical location, sexual orientation, education, life station, or yes, even gender, you too can be a feminist —and if you can see a piece of yourself in Hermione Granger, you probably already are.

Notes

1. For a much more in-depth overview of Hermione's literary history, Eliza Dresang's *Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender* (in Whited's The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon (2004)) provides a remarkably complete listing of other Hermiones throughout literature.

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Hermione:
An Introduction

The Filmic Heroine

JULIE ALEXANDER

When J.K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* book series, was asked in an interview with *Oprah Magazine* why she chose to write outside her gender, her answer was:

> I had been writing the first book for six months before I stopped and thought, "Why's [Harry Potter] a boy?" And the answer is, He's a boy because that's the way he came. If I had stopped at that point and changed him to Harriet, it would have felt very contrived. My feminist conscience is saved by Hermione, who's the brightest character. I love Hermione as a character. She's kind of a caricature of me when I was younger [January 2001].

In this answer, Rowling alludes to a question frequently asked of the *Harry Potter* franchise: is the series inherently feminist? It is important here to note the difference between the terms *feminist* and *feminized*. The former, *feminist*, promotes gender equality; whereas the latter, *feminized*, filters gender perspective (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011). While the feminist motifs of the *Harry Potter* book series are in heated debate, it is a given that the books are in fact feminized, because they originate from a female author and her perspective of men, women, and relationships. Female authors write male characters from the position of "the other" (CUNY, 2009). This means that a woman must write from a female perspective, because it is the only viewpoint she has ever known (Humm, 1986). Therefore, her characters, male or female, are feminized. Inversely, male writers write female characters as filtered through the male experience. As a result, those characters are masculinized. This is an inescapable circumstance in cross-gendered writing. The *Harry Potter* book series is decidedly feminized because of the filtered female perspectives and projections of J.K. Rowling as a woman author. However, just because the book series is feminized, it does not automatically follow suit that it is also feminist (Coward, 1980). Feminism is a more active standpoint than feminization. Feminization is passively influenced through pre-existing gender experiences. Feminism, though, is consciously concerned with the power struggles between genders.

From Literature to Cinema

Almost all of the other authors in this volume deal with novel Hermione. However, none deal specifically and exclusively with movie Hermione. This is an important distinction to make because, while the two versions of literary and filmic Hermione share much in common, they are still unique in their characterization and must be treated as separate entities. Therefore, this prefatory essay is an examination of the filmic, movie Hermione.

When the *Harry Potter* book series became a worldwide phenomenon, it was not long before Hollywood decided to translate the literary magical adventures onto film. Warner Bros. Pictures bought out the production from a movie pitch by producer David Heyman. "Heyman's early enthusiasm and his promise of fidelity to the printed word were vital in Rowling agreeing to a deal with Warner at the end of 1997, giving them the rights to the first four books and options on the final three in a projected series of seven" (Pendreigh, 2001).

Rowling also played an active role in overseeing the adaption of the book material for film. Warner Bros. Pictures ordered production under David Heyman for the first film, even as the book series was still undergoing its initial publishing (Pendreigh, 2001). As the film franchise gained momentum, key changes were made to the *Harry Potter* story and characters in order to better translate them to screen for a mass audience. As what happens when any material undergoes change of medium and/or channel, many aspects of the original literary material were either cut out or lost in translation—even with J.K. Rowling's contributions to the film franchise. This greatly influences how the source material is portrayed via adaptation.

The Filmic Hermione

J.K. Rowling's original Hermione Granger underwent a great deal of changes for the Hollywood cinematic screen. Much of the character's complexity was simplified or summarized into a condensed time/space within each film. As a result, the filmic Hermione lost pre-deterministic degrees of depth that the literary Hermione had obtained. The film productions served to reconstruct an image of Rowling's original character. However, simplification and reduced exposure of a character affects their dynamicism. Hermione went from innovation to commodity. It is difficult to adequately explain Hermione Granger's transformation from literature to film without addressing feminist theory in cinema and aspects of Hollywood film production.

A cornerstone concept of feminist film theory is the *male gaze*. In 1975, a female scholar named Laura Mulvey published a revolutionary essay titled "Visual Pleasure

and Narrative Cinema." Mulvey asserted that cinema is inherently masculinized through patriarchal power structures behind the film industry and target market. The *male gaze* encompasses the concept that all images in cinema, especially those regarding the portrayal of women, serve to act as social reinforcements of male perceptions (Mulvey, p. 62). Women in film hence become fetishized—for better or worse—in order to set or maintain power expectations between genders within a male dominated society. These attempts to define femininity through the *male gaze* serve as poignant commentary on women in culture through how females are empowered or subverted by their characterization and roles within a filmic narrative.

Much like in cross-gendered writing, film approaches women as "the other" by default. Therefore, feminist theory primarily functions by "reading against the grain" of films' preferred readings in order to find subtext and social commentary on these power struggles between men and women through gender portrayal, sexual representation, and agency (Kayes, 1989). Like feminism, feminist film theory concentrates on how gender is empowered or subverted through cinema. This affects the filmic representation of Hermione Granger in multiple ways.

Under first consideration is the casting and appearance of the character. Whereas literature allows its audience the freedom to imagine Hermione's appearance through the author's textual cues and guidelines, film immediately dictates Hermione's appearance through casting, make up, and wardrobe. Upon actress Emma Watson's casting as Hermione, controversy sparked amongst fans of the *Harry Potter* franchise as to whether or not she accurately captured J.K. Rowling's canon appearance of the character. As one female fan, Suzanne Reisman, vents in her blog post, "Hermione Granger: Feminist Role Model":

> I was pretty disappointed when the first Harry Potter movie came out and I discovered that they cast Emma Watson, an adorable girl who looks nothing like Hermione's dowdy geek in the book, to play her.... I felt it sent a negative message: if this adorable girl on the screen is known to fans as dorky, what on earth could us real dorks ever do to live up to such an impossible standard? (2007).

Here, Reisman makes a valid point on how the appearance of a character can greatly influence their impression on an audience and potentially twist/set social expectations via prominent exposure in popular culture and media. Watson's casting occurred for strategic marketing reasons. Because the *Harry Potter* film franchise was anticipated to draw in major box office results, Warner Brothers approached the production through the confines of studio standards. Within the studio system, film tends to gloss over

certain key concepts of source material and instead use aestheticism to provide visual pleasure to the audience. This often compromises the integrity of the source material.

Under second consideration—more importantly—is the portrayal of the character's agency. This regards Hermione's empowerment as a female in the *Harry Potter* film franchise. How does the filmic Hermione relate to her circumstances and counterparts? What exposure is she allowed? In truth, the filmic Hermione is more often than not sidelined as a character in the franchise. The majority of the *Harry Potter* films focused less on the main trinity of characters, instead giving main exposure to Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) as the title character. The early exception to this unspoken rule was *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), the third film of the franchise (IMDb.com).

The third film marked a change in direction of the *Harry Potter* film franchise. Alfonso Cuarón replaced the director of the first two films, Chris Columbus (IMDb.com). Cuarón shifted the aesthetics of the franchise away from Columbus's colorful coordination to a darker, more sensible atmosphere. The characters were allowed to wear everyday garb instead of Hogwart's school uniforms; this wardrobe change accentuated the feel of practicality. The cast's overall acting also vastly improved, especially amongst the main Trio of characters: Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint), and—particularly—Hermione (Emma Watson). The entire production took on a naturalistic approach, which helped the audience to invest more into this film than the previous two, because the fantasy was portrayed as realistic to everyday life and the overall atmosphere felt less "other worldly." The film's story could have very well taken place in present day Britain.

The focus on character development in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* benefited from Alfonso Cuarón's direction. This film goes more in depth with the characters, who are all coming to terms with their identity. Hermione takes a clear leading role in the third film. Even in the main poster advertisements, her's is the face in center—not Harry's (IMDb.com). Likewise, Hermione is also given more screen time and immensely more agency in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. In many ways, this film is a tale of Hermione's coming-of-age. The previous *Harry Potter* films portrayed her as haughty caricature of J.K. Rowling's literary original. However, by the third film, Hermione comes off as having finally found her center. She is no longer haughty or out to prove herself. Rather, she is comfortable in her own skin and humble about her intellect and skills, while still maintaining self-confidence. She overloads herself in classes in order to achieve more education, even if that means using a time-turner to break the traditional rules of academics. Hermione also takes an active stance against racial oppression. When Draco Malfoy, who repeatedly calls her a "filthy mudblood," discriminates against his peers, Hermione finally fights back and punches him in the face. This direct act of physical confrontation serves to empower her in a

masculinized way. She earns respect from her peers through traditional male forms of violence.

Hermione also serves to save the lives of the core Trio, the magical griffin known as Buckbeak, and also Harry's godfather, Sirius Black, by guiding Harry back in time via her time-turner. The duo succeeds because of her wariness, skill, and cunning ability to adapt to challenging situations. Hermione essentially saves the day and commands principal screen time, dominating the second half of the film. She becomes incredibly empowered as a female character in the series, and is shown to be the most essential member of the core character trinity. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* marked Hermione's self-actualization as a character. This film was the most progressive feminist film of the *Harry Potter* franchise.

However, as what happens in many cases with female characters in popular culture, the subsequent fourth film in the series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005), overall regressed Hermione as a character and subverted the majority of her power and agency that she obtained in the third film (IMDb.com). Whereas in the third film Hermione was portrayed as a strong independent young woman who carried the male heroes to safety throughout the plot, the fourth film attempted to overly feminize her by shifting focus to her relationships with Harry and Ron. Essentially, the character was turned into a love interest or damsel in distress, allowing Harry to overtake the majority of the film. Gone was any true attempt to concentrate on individual character development. Instead, Hermione became sexualized by the film, as is most apparent during the Yule Ball sequence when she conforms to traditional feminine gender roles in actions and appearance and finally obtains the adolescent, romantic attentions of Ron. This marks a detrimental turn of her character in the film franchise.

The films following *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* did very little to correct the fourth film's regression, and Hermione became sidelined once again. Upon retrospect, the extreme juxtaposition of Hermione's power/agency flux felt purposeful on the part of Warner Brothers. Why empower the female lead in one film only to subvert her power in the next? Did Hermione become a perceived threat to the franchise because she was a strong female, feminist character? Was her power subverted because an empowered Hermione in all her indexical and symbolic meaning both promoted feminism and conflicted with the traditional ideas behind the *male gaze*? It is worthwhile to analyze why the filmic Hermione is portrayed certain ways because it reflects on the overall rhetorical messages of the *Harry Potter* film franchise and its view on gender and society.

True redemption of Hermione Granger as a feminist character in the *Harry Potter* film franchise came not until the 2010 release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows:*

Part 1 (IMDb.com). In the first part of the final movie installment Hermione is quickly reinserted into power in a major way. Despite the title, this film has very little to do with Harry Potter and almost everything to do with Hermione.

In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, Hermione is the true protagonist. She is central in both driving the sets and the plot. Almost every aspect of the film is filtered through her character. Likewise, she becomes the core of the main character trinity—the one whom everyone depends on. While Harry may have the title of leadership by being *the chosen one*, this role is almost purely ceremonial. Hermione is in fact the practical leader of the Trio, as asserted throughout the entire film.

It is also important to note that the majority of focus on Hermione as the underlying crux of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* was once again reverted back with the release of the second and final volume, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (IMDb.com). The final volume served to reassert focus on Harry Potter as the title character, while pushing all others—to especially include Hermione—into seemingly supportive roles. While Hermione does exercise agency and strong capabilities in the final film volume, she does not serve as its basis. Therefore the character loses much of her power and exposure that she had regained in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, which was almost entirely based on Hermione's experiences. Yet again, Warner Bros. made a decision to market and make the final film installment on the basis of a male lead, with the main character Trio forced into the backdrop.

So it remains that *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* is the most progressively feminist film of the *Harry Potter* franchise, as well as the most Hermione-centric. The purpose of this essay is to analyze how Hermione is the true, feminist, protagonist of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* by what means she influences the film through narrative, gender, and power exchanges.

Filmic Hermione of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1

FILM INTRODUCTION/HERMIONE ERASES HER MUGGLE IDENTITY

Save the opening monologue from the Minister of Magic, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* initiates its story by first introducing the audience into Hermione's Muggle world. This is poignant for multiple reasons. This is the only time the *Harry*

Potter film franchise delves into Hermione's home life outside of Hogwarts or the wizarding world. Therefore, the fact that the first time the audience sees her home coincides with her leaving it is incredibly powerful. Even more poignant is that Hermione is not simply leaving behind her home, but completely erasing her Muggle identity as if she had never existed. Why start the film this way, with showing Hermione instead of Harry? The answer is that this scene choice sets the filmic stage for the audience. By initiating the film with Hermione, the audience consciously identifies her as the protagonist for this installment. Hermione is the true hero of this film. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* tracks her epic journey.

This portrayal of Hermione's departure from home is in keeping with the traditional mythic formula for a hero's epic journey (Joseph Campbell, 2008), where the hero—or heroine in this case—must break all of their formal bonds in order to be free or driven to start on their epic journey or quest. Here, Hermione prepares to leave behind her Muggle life in order to set out on her quest with the core character trinity (Hermione, Harry, and Ron) to find and destroy the remaining horcruxes, so that they may defeat Lord Voldemort, the ultimate nemesis of the story. During the obliviation scene, Hermione is shown as remorseful, but resolute in her actions as she erases all traces of her existence from her parents memories and material possessions. This is done for their protection. As soon as Hermione erases her bonds to family and the outside world, she—ever the Heroine—ventures onto her quest.

HARRY'S TRANSPORT TO THE BURROW

During this scene, Hermione shows initiative with the polyjuice potion. Her dialogue exchange with Mad-Eye Moody suggests that of the core Trio, Hermione is the most involved with the Order of the Phoenix's inner logistics and strategies. She knows more about the transport plan than either Harry or Ron. This implies that she is the practical leader of the Trio, as she has obtained respect and responsibility within the Order.

Also within the polyjuice scene, the audience sees Hermione's magical transformation of physical appearance into Harry, thus directly linking her with the film's title character, and implying a moment of androgyny where Hermione and Harry are blended as one. This is an image of complimentary gender and leadership roles: the best combination of both sexes.

ARRIVAL AT THE BURROW

Hermione instantly recognizes Ron, even though he still physically looks like Harry. At the sight of him, she runs to engage him in an embrace, and then shows surprise when Tonks tells her of Ron's heroism on the way there. He gets defensive at her surprise but indulges the behavior. This moment clearly indicates that Ron and Hermione are romantically attached, and that she usually holds the majority of power and competence within the relationship.

HARRY ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE ON THE QUEST ALONE

When Harry tries to sneak away from The Burrow and take on the horcrux hunt alone, Ron confronts him directly, saying that: "You may be the chosen one ... but this is a whole lot bigger than that [than you]. It's always been bigger than that." This exchange points out the fact that Harry is not the main hero of the story, but rather the Trio is invested in this quest together. Following this statement, more importantly, Ron also refuses to leave behind Hermione because he recognizes that they "wouldn't last two days without her!" This not only directly communicates Hermione as an equal member of the Trio, despite gender, but also that she is essential to their survival and success. Harry might be the chosen one, but Hermione is the true leader of the Trio.

DUMBLEDORE'S WILL

Dumbledore leaves Hermione a copy of *Tales of Beetle and the Bard*, "in the hope that she find it entertaining and instructive." This inheritance alludes to Hermione's book smarts and vast knowledge. By giving her the book, Dumbledore posthumously recognizes her as the taskmaster of the Trio. This scene also reminds the audience of Hermione's mudblood status, since Ron points out that she would not know wizarding fairy tales because she was raised in the Muggle world as a child. This scene also establishes the bloodline status of the Trio: Ron is a pureblood, Harry is a half-blood, and Hermione is a mudblood. Of the Trio, only Ron has grown up with the knowledge of wizarding fairy tales; Harry and Hermione have to familiarize themselves with those magical customs.

THE WEDDING

In this scene, Hermione dresses up for the second time ever in the film franchise. She wears a simple, yet elegant, deep red dress. Red, according to traditional film codes, would symbolize Hermione as a sexual object or love interest. This coding is reinforced by Ron's reaction to her appearance: he stares longingly at her. In this case, Ron is meant to represent the audience. Hermione's feminization is placed on a pedestal as a rare, but celebrated event. Here, Hermione's sexuality is acknowledged, but still tied to a male lead. She does not achieve sexual independence by conforming to gender norms.

LONDON

When Death Eaters attack the wedding, it is Hermione who disapparates Harry and Ron out of harm. She transports them to a place she knew and had visited many times as a Muggle child. This is the first of many times in the film that Hermione dictates the setting. Therefore, whatever locations or events take place, ultimately they are filtered through her life experience. The London sequence once again asserts Hermione's Muggle heritage; this will be an extremely prominent motif in the film.

Hermione takes charge of the situation and leads Ron and Harry to safety. She comes prepared with a bag magically packed full of clothes and supplies, to which Ron exclaims that she is "amazing." This also labels her as the Trio's provider, which is a borderline maternal concept of females taking care of males. However, this also gives her power as the Trio's taskmaster, which is a masculine trait. Hence, Hermione embodies a sense of androgyny. This is effective, though, because the other two males embrace her lead and use her as the key decision maker and sounding board for their quest.

When the Trio is yet again attacked in the diner, it is Hermione who neutralizes the male Death Eater. She also demands the female Muggle worker to leave the diner for safety —showing same-gender dominance after a physically masculine act. Hermione is constantly shown as assertive when conditions dictate she take control. After the Death Eater is defeated, Ron vocalizes the desire to torture him. Harry and Hermione both talk him down. In this exchange Ron says that Harry is the boss, but then immediately concedes power to Hermione by admitting that she is the best with spells. Here, he addresses the Trio's power structure. Ron acts as a henchman, Harry tries to carry the overall burden, but Hermione is the truly operational leader.

After Ron reinforces her status, Hermione steps forward and "obliviates" the male Death Eater, essentially erasing his entire existence—an act much more powerful than

merely killing him. This is an extremely masculine act, her erasing his imprint and memory. This moment empowers Hermione from a feminist perspective. Here a female literally overtakes and conquers a male. Through this act the female then takes on an alpha status, and the gender equilibrium scale is thrown from one extreme to the other. By dominating a man, Hermione asserts Female Empowerment to the point of discomfort. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the film immediately undercuts her power in the very next scene, in order to realign the patriarchal power scale.

This next scene regresses Hermione's status from threatening Alpha Female to traditional gender roles as she randomly mourns the fact that she and Ginny had baked a cake for Harry's birthday, but they never got to surprise him or celebrate his birthday. This exchange plays to two feminine myths: female kinship and females cooking for males. This is a clear attempt by the film to subvert Hermione's power back to a manageable, familiar social norm. However, the exchange does not end there. Not only is Hermione forced back into gender equilibrium—her power is further subverted when Harry calls her out for the ill-timed frivolity of her thoughts. He verbally asserts personal power over Hermione, and also indirectly reasserts himself as the supposed leader of the Trio through his criticism of her. So, once again, Male dominance overtakes the film. That dominance is short-lived, however, as Hermione regains power within the Trio over time.

THE FORMER ORDER OF THE PHOENIX HEADQUARTERS

The Trio seeks refuge in Sirius Black's house, the former headquarters for the Order of the Phoenix. In this scene, the audience sees Hermione once again take charge of the Trio. The main dialogue exchanges consist of Ron asking expositional questions and Hermione providing answers. This illustrates her vast knowledge of the situation, paired with common sense. This sequence once again brings up Hermione's bloodline when the purist Black's house-elf calls Hermione a "filthy mudblood" as he defies her. Even to this second-class magical creature, Hermione's bloodline is something to be sneered at. This is the first outright instance of racial oppression directed against Hermione in the film.

BREAKING INTO THE MINISTRY OF MAGIC

When the Trio discovers that Dolores Umbridge, a ministry official, possesses one of Voldemort's horcruxes (a locket), they make plans to break into the Ministry of Magic,

which has been overtaken by Death Eaters and Voldemort supporters, in order to steal the horcrux. As part of the strategy, Harry and Ron stun ministry workers outside the entranceway and Hermione makes polyjuice potion for the Trio to take on the physical disguise of the stunned workers. Hermione also gives Ron and Harry a mission brief of the task, once again taking charge of coordinating the Trio.

Once inside the ministry, Hermione takes a moment to contemplate her personal fear and disgust at the ministry's new central statue, which shows "Muggles in their proper place," literally being crushed by the magical world. The statue's indicated racial discrimination hits a chord with Hermione because she is Muggle-born. This scene illustrates that Hermione, along with other mudbloods, is actively discriminated against throughout the film for being of a lesser bloodline. Therefore, she has the most to lose if ever caught. Hermione, while the strongest member of the Trio, is in the position of least social power in current magical society. She is oppressed and outcast from preferable, *pure* witches.

This racial motif is further emphasized later on in the sequence when Hermione is forced to attend and witness a trial of a Muggle-born witch who has had her wand (symbol of power) confiscated by the ministry. The situational irony is that this witch could very well have been Hermione on trial, had circumstances been different. When Harry initiates a fight, Hermione takes the horcrux locket away from Umbridge—a minor reassertion of Hermione's power as she rebels against her oppressors. After an intense chase, the Trio escapes the ministry.

INTO THE FOREST

When Ron is injured during the escape from the ministry, Hermione is instantly by his side to nurse his wounds. She knows how to help heal him, and directs Harry's assistance, commanding his obedience. The Trio ends up in the forest because Hermione once again transports them from harm and dictates their locale. The forest is a place she visited before as a child. Hermione acts as both taskmaster (masculine) and nurturer/provider (feminine) for the Trio as she sets protective spells around them, while delegating other campsite tasks to Harry while Ron heals.

Hermione also takes on the role of mediator when tensions rise between Harry and Ron. When Harry finally snaps at her, Hermione says, "I'm doing everything I can," to which Harry screams that she "isn't doing enough!" This exchange vents Harry's frustration over the strained situation and the fact that Hermione cannot instantly fix their struggles. It is an ill-conceived insult, and Hermione instantly puts Harry in his proper, respectful

place through logical appeals. Here, Harry and Hermione represent gender reversal, as he is seen as emotional and irrational (stereotypically feminine characteristics), whereas Hermione maintains a logical, task-oriented approach to conflict resolution (stereotypically masculine characteristics).

Once tensions are temporarily calmed, Hermione takes watch over the camp and patrols the forest. While patrolling, she encounters enemy bounty hunters, known as *snatchers*, who are roaming the forest for their next capture. The snatchers are unable to physically see Hermione because of her protective spells. However, they can still smell her perfume. The first question here is why would Hermione wear perfume at all on this quest? This seems out of character, considering that every other aspect of Hermione harbors practicality within the film. That said, if it is believable for Hermione to wear perfume, then that one decidedly traditional feminine habit almost lands her in mortal danger. Thankfully, the snatchers do not identify her presence. Harry observes the occurrence from afar. After the threat has passed, he reasserts power over Hermione by verbally discouraging her feminine frivolity and tells her to stop wearing perfume. This exchange once again undercuts Hermione's already well-established power and momentarily subverts her agency.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

As time passes, Ron begins to feel more and more isolated within the Trio. He also starts to become jealous of Harry and Hermione's synergistic dynamic. By this point, Harry and Hermione have embraced each other's contributions to the quest. While ultimately harboring a platonic friendship, the duo takes on a domestic style in their communication and activities. Hermione even cuts Harry's hair. At one point, Hermione has an epiphany about Godric Gryffindor's Sword and refocuses the quest. Upon hearing Hermione's epiphany, Harry describes her as "truly brilliant." Hermione's response is to say, "Actually I'm highly logical which allows me to look past extraneous detail and perceive clearly that which others overlook."

RON CONFRONTS THE DUO

Celebration over Hermione's epiphany is short-lived, however, because a jealous, frustrated Ron finally lashes out at Harry and her. Hermione tries to reason with him, but fails. Ron demands that she choose to either leave with him or stay with Harry. This is a blatant test of her loyalty. Ever aware of the ramifications, though, Hermione sticks

to her quest. When Hermione does not immediately agree to leave with him, Ron accuses her of having a romantic affair with Harry. This is a low emotional blow, attacking Hermione at her sexual core. This is Ron's way of robbing her of any true power in the exchange—by suggesting that she might be a whore. In shock, Hermione tells him that there is nothing between her and Harry, but Ron doesn't believe her. He storms off and she chases after, pleading with him to stay. His disapparates off-screen; the audience does not get to see Hermione's immediate reaction. The next scene displays Hermione's isolation and quiet grief over Ron's departure.

CONTINUING ONWARD

Only when Hermione is robbed of her romantic partner and is distracted by grief does she begin to relinquish her established power. Sensing Hermione's weakened state, Harry steps up to take charge of the situation and transport them to continue their quest. After Ron leaves, the gender and power roles reverse between Harry and Hermione. He begins to protect and nurture her. In one scene of the film, which was not originally present in literary franchise, Harry seeks out Hermione and leads her in a dance for a while of reprieve. This scene helps illustrate that Harry and Hermione have a very feminist friendship. They each adapt to the others needs in terms of gender flux and power structures. Therefore, when Harry finally asserts a task for the quest—to go to Godric's Hollow—Hermione reluctantly agrees.

GODRIC'S HOLLOW

Harry and Hermione apparate to Godric's Hollow, and share an intimate moment as she comforts Harry's grief over the death of his parents. Hermione magically conjures a bouquet of flowers at the Potter's tombstone. While Harry is distracted at his parent's graves, Hermione finds a strange emblem in the cemetery, later revealed to symbolize the Deathly Hallows. When a strange woman shows up, Hermione instinctually does not trust her. Later, when the old lady turns out to be Lord Voldemort's pet snake sent to kill Harry, Hermione instantly comes to his aid and protects him from harm. In the process, she takes possession of Harry's lost wand (his symbol of power) in order to defend them both and escape.

BACK TO THE FOREST

Yet again, Hermione transports them to a safe place that she visited with her parents while growing up. In this scene, Hermione finally opens up about her loss and vulnerability. She tells Harry, “I came here once with my Mum and Dad years ago. It’s just how I remember it: the trees, the river—everything ... like nothing’s changed. That’s not true, of course; everything’s changed. If I brought my parents back here now they probably wouldn’t recognize any of it: not the trees, nor the river ... not even me.” Her words are not overly emotional. She does not cry. Rather, she appears to be in forlorn despair over all that has happened to her since she first visited this forest as a child—her loss of innocence and Muggle identity.

In this moment, Hermione recognizes how these locations are a mere echo of her past—she has become the most isolated from her loss. Not even Harry can truly comfort her. Hermione half-heartedly suggests that she and Harry just give up their quest and stay in the forest forever, but it is clear that she would never truly abandon the quest. Hermione has too strong a sense of responsibility to indulge her own desires over the greater good. Meanwhile, it’s discovered that Harry’s wand was destroyed in Godric’s Hollow, so he commands Hermione to give him her wand in exchange (thus taking away her power).

RON’S RETURN (FOREST)

After Harry obtains the Sword of Godric Gryffindor from the lake and Ron reappears and rescues him, they attempt to use the sword to destroy the locket horcrux. Ron shows initiative by trying to destroy the horcrux himself. Voldemort placed a defense spell on the locket, however, and it activates against Ron. The spell points out all of Ron’s greatest fears, especially focusing on his jealousy of Harry and Hermione and his perceptions of their possible sexual union. The spell illustrates it by showing Harry and Hermione kissing in the nude after degrading Ron. The scene is disconcerting for many reasons.

Primarily, it depicts Hermione by her mere associations with men. It does not treat her as a single entity but rather as a part of a unit. It communicates that Hermione is only seen as a love interest between the two men of the Trio, which is false. It also suggests that it is not possible for her and Harry to only have a platonic relationship. Since they are heterosexuals of opposite-gender, it is automatically suggested that there must be some romantic tension between them. This plays into the myth that men and women cannot just be friends; that they will always have some sexual motivation.

Thankfully, Ron manages to see past the spell, and destroy the horcrux.

RON'S RETURN (CAMP)

Upon Hermione seeing Ron's return, her anger over his initial abandonment seethes forth and she violently confronts him. At one point, she turns at Harry, demanding that he return her wand so she can use it against Ron. Harry refuses but backs far away from Hermione, frightened by her rage. Both Harry and Ron cower before her. This is the first time in the film that Hermione is portrayed as highly emotional and irrational. After having embraced androgyny for the majority of the film, this sudden outburst is both jarring and yet acceptable, because it is directed against her love interest. This plays to the myth of the woman keeping her man in line.

Hermione only calms when Ron confesses that his connection with her is what led him back to them. Even after his touching speech, she still does not immediately embrace him. This alludes to the fact that Hermione's impassioned state is still dictated by personal strength. She will not simply bend to Ron's affections; she holds him accountable for his actions. Sometime later, Hermione again asserts herself as the taskmaster of the Trio when she enters the tent and says "we need to talk." Ron thinks she wants to talk about their relationship/feelings, but Hermione quickly undercuts his assumption and keeps the conversation task-oriented. Ron and Hermione's relationship is bereft with gender/power reversal.

Hermione links the Godric's Hollow symbol to one in the book Dumbledore gave her. She wants to talk to the Lovegoods, who have been seen with the symbol. Ron, still focusing on redeeming himself to Hermione, tries to assert himself and agree with her task. Hermione does not dignify him with a response, though; she gives him only a skeptical look. Despite Ron's efforts to appease her, Hermione still maintains anger towards him, and becomes the most empowered in the relationship.

VISITING THE LOVEGOODS

The Trio arrives at the Lovegoods' home. Luna, their schoolmate and friend, is nowhere to be found. Her father, Mr. Lovegood, is there alone. When asked about the symbol, Mr. Lovegood directs them to read about the wizarding tale of *Death and the Three Brothers*. Hermione pulls out *The Tales of Beetle and the Bard* and reads the story aloud. In this scene, only Hermione is ignorant of the story of the three Brothers. Alas she is thrust back into pursuing her own knowledge of the wizarding world. There is continued tension between Ron and Hermione. Shortly thereafter, it is revealed that

Death Eaters took away Luna, and Mr. Lovegood is willing to turn in the Trio in order to get his daughter back. Death Eaters begin to attack the house, and the Trio escapes once more.

SNATCHER'S TRAP

However, they apparate straight into a snatcher's trap and try to evade capture. When it becomes apparent that they cannot escape, Hermione takes charge and jinxes Harry's face by magic, so that he becomes unrecognizable to the snatchers. Hermione's split-second decision nearly saves them. The Trio succumbs to capture. The Head Snatcher proceeds to ask for the Trio's names and identities.

When he asks Hermione, the Head Snatcher invades her personal space and strokes her face in a predatory manner. This act is disconcerting because of its implied sexual intent. It borderline implies the threat of rape. The Head Snatcher attempts to dominate Hermione through sexual power. Hermione, clearly uncomfortable with this physical invasion, tells him an alias name, and then says that she is a half-blood, not a mudblood. While this is a clear attempt to lessen the potential discrimination against her, Hermione still does not completely disown her heritage. She does not claim the title of a pureblood, but rather something that still accounts for her root identity. The Head Snatcher is satisfied with this response and leaves her alone. However, upon examining deformed Harry, he still notices Harry's trademark lightning scar and declares that they will take the Trio to the Death Eaters.

MALFOY'S MANSION

Bellatrix Lestrange greets them at the gate and brings them into the mansion. It is interesting that Bellatrix automatically assumes that Hermione was the one to jinx Harry. There's no true explanation offered as to why she came to that conclusion. However, before Bellatrix can test Hermione's wand, she becomes distracted at the sight of the Sword of Godric Gryffindor, which was apparently stolen from her vault (a sub-plot hole within the film). One of the snatchers states that the sword was in Hermione's bag. Bellatrix instantly reclaims the sword and attacks the snatchers, driving them out of the mansion. She then separates Harry and Ron—throwing them into the cellar—and keeps Hermione for interrogation.

Here, the audience sees Hermione in tears from genuine fear as Bellatrix threatens her during interrogation. When Bellatrix does not believe Hermione's answers, she resorts to torture and begins carving something into Hermione's arm. Hermione cries and screams desperately off screen. Of the Trio, Hermione is the only one to undergo physical torture in the film.

As Ron and Harry find Luna and try to figure out a way to rescue Hermione, Dobby the House-Elf, who is a friend of the Trio, suddenly apparates into the Malfoy's cellar. He helps Luna, Harry, and Ron to escape. Harry and Ron stay behind to save Hermione, who now manages to take on both *damsel in distress* and *martyr* roles in the scene. As a form of torture, Bellatrix enacts the most powerful racial oppression against Hermione by carving the word *mudblood* literally into Hermione's arm (eerily similar to Holocaust victims of WWII, who had numbers tattooed on their arms). Bellatrix is determined to harm Hermione more, but Ron runs to save her. Bellatrix fights against Ron and Harry; when the duo gets the upper hand in the fight, she takes Hermione hostage and holds a knife to her throat.

As Bellatrix commands Lucius Malfoy to call Voldemort, Dobby intervenes and prevents Bellatrix from causing more harm. Dobby protects the Trio and asserts himself against his/their oppressors: "Dobby has no master. Dobby is a free elf, and Dobby has come to save Harry Potter and his friends!" He disapparates the Trio to safety. However, Bellatrix throws her knife at Dobby as he disapparates—mortally wounding him.

DOBBY'S DEATH

When they discover Dobby is injured, Harry and Ron instantly rush to his side. Even as Dobby dies, and Hermione recovers from having just been tortured, Harry still irrationally expects her to heal Dobby's wounds. It is clear that Harry is driven by a pure emotional state—however, his appeals to Hermione seem insensitive to the fact that she is wounded also. Whatever the case, Dobby's injures are too severe for Hermione to heal. Still irrational, Harry continues to beg for her help anyway, but there is nothing she can do. For the first time ever in the film, post-torture Hermione is powerless and can only helplessly watch as Dobby dies. Ron holds her in an embrace. She later helps Harry bury Dobby's body and they prepare to continue on their quest for the horcruxes.

Meanwhile, Lord Voldemort obtains the Elder Wand of the Deathly Hallows and exponentially increases his power.

Conclusion

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010) marks another turning point within the *Harry Potter* film franchise. Not only does the movie reassert Hermione Granger into main focus, it also makes her the true protagonist. The entirety of the film is founded upon her character. It is constantly communicated that she is the most essential of the main character trinity because she displays the most ideal leadership and focus, through androgyny. Hermione's relationship with Harry also achieves a sense of gender equilibrium throughout the film, where they check and support each other, evenly exchanging power as needed. Their friendship promotes feminist views. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, Hermione achieves a great deal of depth and growth as she comes to terms with her racial, Muggle identity and learns to both be wary of her heritage. But also embrace it. Hermione Granger becomes a powerful feminist role model, showing that—despite oppression—women can still achieve great accomplishments and truly make a difference.

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"I'm Hoping to Do Some Good in the World"

Hermione Granger and Feminist Ethics

ATJE GERCAMA

Anyone who has ever read even one of the *Harry Potter* novels is bound to remember how Harry and Voldemort find themselves on opposite sides where good and evil are concerned. Harry being on the side of the good, of love, as Professor Dumbledore has often repeated, and Voldemort on the side of evil. In fact, the *Harry Potter* series can be read as not only being about Harry, but as about ethics: the study of good and evil.

However, Harry is not the only one who is engaged with questions of good and evil. Ron, and to an even larger extent, Hermione, are engaged in these questions as well. This essay will focus on Hermione, and it will attempt to answer the question, to what extent can Hermione be seen as a feminist?

In popular thought, feminism is often equated with a struggle for gender equality. Regularly, our newspapers publish articles about glass ceilings or unequal wages. For a large part, feminism is about equality, but that is not feminism's only concern. Different types of feminisms have different focal points. One of these branches of feminism is feminist ethics.

In this essay, I will argue that Hermione can be seen as a feminist because her ethical reasoning resonates with many of the elements of feminist ethics. In order to make this argument, I will first consider how feminist ethics relates to equality and inequality, and I will demonstrate that the Potterverse is characterized by a far-reaching gender equality. Next, I will examine two types of feminist ethics: care-oriented perspectives and status-oriented perspectives. These perspectives will be used to highlight the feminist elements of Hermione's ethics. Before reaching a conclusion, I will consider the question of how care and justice relate to each other, and how Hermione's ethics as well as her storyline can shed some light on the debate about care versus justice.

Feminist Theory and Feminist Ethics—Exploring Some Key Terms

This essay focuses on how an analytic framework based on feminist ethics can be of use in explaining how Hermione Granger can be seen as feminist. To explore the intricacies of this argument, however, it is necessary to first look at some key terms in feminist ethics and feminism in more detail.

Equality is one of the key terms of feminist theory that can mainly be found in liberal feminism. It is often used to argue that women are equal to men, and should be able to hold the same jobs and get the same wage for doing the same work as men. This focus on equality has a long history. In fact, it can be traced back to the earliest forms of feminism, which started to gain momentum in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This wave of feminist activity, often called "first wave feminism," was defined by women's attempt to get suffrage. In Britain, writer Virginia Woolf addresses the topic in two books: *A Room of One's Own,* and *Three Guineas,* which are seen as classic statements of first wave feminism. *A Room of One's Own* is focused mainly on women as (fiction) writers. Woolf argues that women have been unable to write and compete with men on equal terms, because they have been economically dependent on men. As Michèle Barrett summarizes in her introduction to the volume, Woolf's argument focuses on "lack of material resources" and other "external constraints on women's productivity" (Barrett, 2000, p. xv).

Woolf also argues, *contra* the suffragette movement, for writers to have an androgynous (gender neutral) mind, instead of being conscious of one's sex when writing. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf addresses feminism explicitly. She sees it exclusively in the context of women's right to work, and since that right has been attained, feminism is a dead word: "Since the only right, the right to earn a living, has been won, the word [feminism] no longer has a meaning. And a word without meaning is a dead word, a corrupt word" (Woolf, 2000, p. 227).

When the First and, later, the Second World War broke out, feminist concerns were forgotten in the wake of the violence and concerns for survival that ensued. However, after the Second World War had ended, feminism resurfaced. In France, the philosopher Simone de Beauvoir published one of the most important texts of what is called the second feminist wave: *The Second Sex.* This book is one of the starting points of continental second wave feminist theory. It engages with the question why women are seen as secondary to men, or, as De Beauvoir writes, why women are Other. De Beauvoir argues that by seeing women as Other, it means that men are taken as the standard against whom everything is compared, and who determine what is good/right, and what is not. De Beauvoir writes that, because men are seen as strong and intelligent and rational, women need to be seen as weak, less intelligent, and emotional, in order to uphold men's image. However, having examined evidence from biology, history, and psychoanalysis, she concludes that there is no solid basis for this supposedly

fundamental difference between the sexes: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," De Beauvoir concludes (De Beauvoir, 1993, p. 281). The implications are clear: if there is no compelling evidence for women's supposed difference from men, then they are not, in fact, inferior to men, but equal.

The focus on equality between men and women is sometimes used to claim that women and men are, in fact, the same, and that this is the basis for equality. However, not all feminists agree on this. Within cultural feminism, this claim is often discarded. Cultural feminists argue instead that, although women are not inferior to men, women and men are not the same—there are noticeable differences between the sexes/genders.

Feminism is both a political orientation but also a body of academic theories. As such, it has also influenced other academic disciplines, ethics being one of these. Initially, feminists looked at women's issues, such as abortion or pornography, which had been neglected in mainstream ethical reasoning, and applied traditional ethical methods in their discussion of these issues. However, after a while, a debate ensued about whether the methods of ethics itself were biased towards men. Some feminists started criticizing these methods and building their own ethical systems in an attempt to address this bias (Friedman, 2000, pp. 205–206).

Just as feminist theory encompasses various orientations, such as liberal feminism and cultural feminism as mentioned above, this is also the case with feminist ethics. Some perspectives focus on issues of equality and inequality, arguing in favor of justice and an end of oppression; other perspectives develop ways of moral reasoning that are closer to women's experiences than the traditional methods. Both will be discussed in more detail later on in this essay. First, however, I will examine to what extent the Potterverse is characterized by gender equality.

Equality in the Potterverse

The Magical society is already characterized by widespread gender equality. Mimi R. Gladstein writes:

> J.K. Rowling depicts a world where equal opportunity among the sexes is a given. Unlike our Muggle world, equality is not something one needs to strive for; it is as natural a part of this world as flying on broomsticks and nearly headless ghosts [Gladstein, 2004, p. 49].

Work-wise, women hold positions that come with a lot of esteem. At the Ministry of Magic, for example, Dolores Umbridge holds a very high position as Senior Undersecretary to the Minister of Magic (Rowling, 2007, p. 206). There are female Aurors, Nymphadora Tonks being the primary example, which is another sign of equality (Gladstein, 2004, p. 58). Also, when Harry has to go to court after he produced a Patronus charm to chase away the Dementors in *OotP,* we see that there are a lot of women in the Wizengamot, and they are held in high esteem. In fact, the Head of the Department of Magical Law is a woman: Amelia Susan Bones. When she speaks during Harry's hearing, people listen to her attentively (Rowling, 2003, pp. 127, 129).

At Hogwarts, at least two of the Heads of House are women: for Gryffindor, Professor McGonagall is the Head of House, and Professor Sprout for Hufflepuff. Moreover, when Dumbledore is away for a while, Professor McGonagall takes over as temporary Head of Hogwarts. This speaks to her capabilities as a talented wizard as well as to her capability to hold a position that comes with a lot of responsibilities and challenges.

Furthermore, the number one magical sport, Quidditch, is mixed (Gladstein, 2004, p. 56). At the Quidditch world championship, one of the Chasers who scores quite a few goals for Ireland is female (Rowling, 2001, p. 99). Also, there is at least one all-female Quidditch team, the Holyhead Harpies (Rowling, 2007, p. 98). So, in the world of Quidditch, women are able to compete on a level playing field with men (figuratively speaking!).

Moreover, in the Order of the Phoenix, there are no prescribed gender roles. First of all, women can become members, and not only by virtue of their husband's membership. Tonks, for example, is a member by virtue of her own talents as an Auror, just as Professor McGonagall is a member because she is a talented witch in her own right. When there are specific tasks to be carried out, gender does not matter either. When Harry is collected from his home in *DH* and needs protection even more than usually, because of Voldemort's power and the fact that the protection, which was cast upon him by his mother, stops functioning when he reaches the age of eighteen, wizards as well as witches carry out the protection tasks. Tonks is there, as are Fleur Delacour and Hermione (Rowling, 2007, p. 44).

This is remarkable when compared to the Muggle world. Although more and more countries allow women to join the military, this is still a recent development, and women are still not allowed in all branches of the military. The U.S. Army, for example, does not allow women to serve in combat functions. In his book, *War and Gender*, Joshua S. Goldstein poses a puzzle: "Despite the diversity of gender and war separately, gender roles in war are very consistent across all known human societies" (Goldstein, 2001, p. 3). In other words, fighters in a war have almost always been male,

and where the men go off to war, women have almost always stayed at home. As we have seen, in the *Harry Potter* novels, this is not the case, because women *do* join the men in battle.

Finally, the Magical society also does away with the oft-promoted stereotype that women are naturally peace-loving, nurturing, good souls—what Jean Bethke Elshtain terms "Beautiful Souls," after Hegel (Elshtain, 1987). In the Harry Potter novels, there are numerous women who cannot be called anything but evil. Bellatrix LaStrange is one obvious example, torturing Neville's parents until she had incurably hurt them is just one example of how wicked she is. Secondly, Dolores Umbridge has done her fair share of evil things: from her favorite method of punishment at Hogwarts (the quill that writes with one's own blood), her intolerance of "half-breeds" as well as her role in the court proceedings against people who were Muggle-born in *DH*. As we can see, in the Potterverse, even in matters of good and evil, there is gender equality. Mimi Gladstein writes:

> Rowling creates male and female characters across the moral spectrum. [...] Each character is judged individually by what kind of person he or she is, and each character is given the opportunity to be either good or evil. It is the individual characters' choices that make them what they are—not their gender [Gladstein, 2004, p. 59].

This overview of equality in the Magical society demonstrates that there is, indeed, far-reaching gender equality that stretches from the jobs that women have, and succeed in, the sports they play, and how they can be good as well as bad people.

Summarizing, although the relations between humans and other species are characterized by inequality, when we isolate the level of human relations, we can see that the Magical society is characterized by far-stretching gender equality. With equality of men and women being such an important concern of feminism, to what extent can Hermione still be called a feminist? One possible answer to this question will be elaborated upon in the next section.

Feminist Ethics

This section will explore the two main approaches to feminist ethics, namely ethics of care, and status-oriented approaches to feminist ethics. These two perspectives will form the basis for an exploration of Hermione's ethics, and it will be argued that Hermione's ethics can be called feminist.

ETHICS OF CARE

> *"Are you planning to follow a career in Magical Law, Miss Granger?" asked Scrimgeour.*
> *"No I'm not," retorted Hermione. "I'm hoping to do some good in the world!"*—Rowling, 2007, p. 105

The idea of *care* is a core concept in feminist ethics. In an effort to address male bias in ethics, as described above, care came to be seen as an alternative way of moral reasoning. Whereas traditional ethics tries to come to conclusions about the morality of actions based on *justice,* some branches of feminist ethics focus on *care* instead.

This centrality of care in feminist ethics has its roots in work done by, among others, Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. In the 1980s, Carol Gilligan worked on moral psychology. Her major work, *In a Different Voice*, was a response done to work by Lawrence Kohlberg on how children's moral decision-making changes as they grow up. Kohlberg distinguished six different stages in children's moral development, and argued that only those who had reached the sixth stage, which was characterized by making moral decisions through the application of universal principles, were fully morally developed. However, whereas most boys of a certain age had reached stage six, most girls of the same age were stuck at Kohlberg's third stage, where they focused on the needs of people and maintaining relationships. Kohlberg concluded that girls tended not to be as morally mature as boys.

Gilligan, however, disagreed with Kohlberg, and argued that the girls were not less advanced morally, but instead used a different mode of moral reasoning that was different from, but equal to, the boys' reasoning. Whereas the boys' moral reasoning employed universal moral principles, the girls used a different moral voice and focused on care instead. Although by now, the validity of Gilligan's empirical work has been disputed, the distinction she made between an ethics that focused on justice and an ethic that focused on care is still often used (Rachels & Rachels, 2007, pp. 163–166).

Nell Noddings is one author who makes a classic argument for an ethics of care. She builds her argument in opposition to two arguments for a universalist ethics, and argues that, firstly, universalist ethics as such does not exist, because although cultures might use similar moral categories, the content of these categories, the actual rules, differ across cultures. Secondly, although morality is based on human characteristics, this does not in itself mean that responses to issues are similar enough to claim that an objective morality is possible (Noddings, 1995, pp. 7–8).

Instead, Noddings proposes to build an ethical system that does not focus on moral judgments (that is, outcomes) so much as on moral impulse. This system will also assume that "there is a form of caring natural and accessible to all human beings" (Noddings, 1995, p. 8). Finally, she proposes not to reason by way of abstract and universal principles, but rather "through a consideration of the concrete elements of situations and a regard for [oneself] as caring" (Noddings, 1995, p. 8).

Noddings distinguishes between two types of caring. The first is *natural caring*—like a mother cares for a child. The second element of morality as an active virtue is *ethical caring*, which occurs in response to the memory of the first, of natural caring. It is "a feeling—as an 'I must'-" that forms the response to the needs of the other and the will to serve our own interests, between which tension exists (Noddings, 1995, pp. 9–10). To commit to an ethics of care, then, requires two things: either committing oneself to the needed action, or, alternatively, thinking about the appropriate response but not necessarily taking action. Someone else, for example, might be better suited to respond to the other's needs (Noddings, 1995, p. 11). Noddings suggests that the impulse to ethical caring results automatically from the impulse to natural caring, whereas natural caring is results from "the more fundamental and natural desire to be and to remain related" (Noddings, 1995, p. 13). So, Noddings explicitly puts relationships between people—and this can mean anything from family ties to friendship—at the centre of her ethics. By responding to the needs of those related to oneself, it is possible to act morally, act as "one-caring," as Noddings puts it.

Noddings' ethics of care, moreover, is also contextual, instead of relying on universifiable ethical principles. Noddings' reasons for this are the following: the problem with principles or ideals is that they are supposed to be universifiable. This requires, as Nietzsche has said, an underlying assumption of sameness. So, if principle Y is valid in situation X, and situation X is characterized by characteristics *a, b,* and *c,* the every situation with those characteristics is similar enough to situation X, in which principle Y should be valid. The problem with this is that it is also possible to have a situation in which characteristics *d, e,* and *f* impact on *a, b,* and *c,* and that makes it questionable whether this situation is similar enough to X, and whether Y is the best principle to apply to this situation. Instead, Noddings argues that it might be best to try and be faithful to an ethical ideal: "maintenance of caring relationships" (Noddings, 1995, p. 14). The limit to this ethical ideal would then be formed by our actual relationships, our relationships to those people we know personally or as friends of friends (Noddings, 1995, p. 15). Summarizing, then, Noddings' ethics of care have two distinct characteristics: relationships between people are accorded a primacy, and they are contextual.

So, how do we demonstrate that Hermione's ethics are an ethics of care? From the discussion of ethics of care, above, three distinct characteristics emerged that should be taken into account. First of all, ethics of care pay attention to context: in different situations, people might have different needs. A second characteristic of ethics of care is the primacy of relationships. Each person has their own particular needs, and recognizing and acting upon these needs is an important part of a feminist ethics of care. For example, you might take one friend shopping if she feels down, whereas another friend would respond a whole lot better to a round of paintball (Porter, 1999, p. 10). Finally, actual *caring* for people is a key element of an ethics of care.

Throughout the novels, Hermione can often be seen paying attention to context. Here, we have to take into account that the novels cover a seven-year period, and Hermione grows up during them. So, for example, in *SS* the very first book in the series, Hermione is initially very focused on following the rules to the letter, much to the annoyance of Ron and Harry. However, after she has covered them when they rescued her from the troll in the bathroom, her attitude towards following rules becomes a bit more lenient (Rowling, 1997). This element of her moral development continues throughout the books. In the following quote from *DH*, Hermione explicitly refers to using the context to decide about good and bad: " 'Muffliato,' she whispered, waving her wand in the direction of the stairs. 'Thought you didn't approve of that spell?' said Ron. 'Times change,' said Hermione" (Rowling, 2007, p. 111).

Another good example of how Hermione's ethical thinking pays attention to context can be found in *OotP*, when Harry, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville, and Luna are at the Ministry of Magic. During the fight with the Death Eaters, one of them gets his head turned into a baby's head; the Death Eater now is, basically, a baby with a man's body, completely unaware of his surroundings and what he had been doing. When Harry wants to curse him, Hermione stops him, telling Harry that he should not hurt a baby.

This situation provides a good illustration of Noddings' argument, explained above, about the problems of unifersiviable ethical principles and in favor of a contextual approach to moral decisions. Here, the characteristics of the situation have changed significantly: whereas the Death Eater first attacked them and was fully responsible for his own deeds, now that his head—and thus his being—has changed into a baby's, he can no longer be held responsible for what he has done earlier. Moreover, he cannot attack them anymore, because he now has the mental capacities of a baby. Whereas previously, Harry and Hermione were fully right to defend themselves, now they have an ethical obligation not to hurt him, because he cannot hurt them anymore. The context in which they cast their spells has changed (Rowling, 2003).

Hermione is also very attentive to people's needs as a particular person, and this influences her moral thinking. This becomes apparent, for example, in *OotP,* when she wants to establish the Defense against the Dark Arts club when Umbridge's lessons have turned out to be less than satisfactory. One night, they talk to Sirius about their plans and Sirius thinks it is a great idea, which makes Hermione reconsider her plan. Hermione's reasoning about this issue takes into account Sirius and his specific personality and needs. She knows that Sirius is basically locked in his own house, and that he loves action and needs some danger in his life (Rowling, 2003, pp. 334–335). These insights also form the background for Hermione's reasoning about the DA. Because she knows that Sirius is not doing well because his needs are not met, *and* that he already has a reckless personality but is now even more likely to be reckless, she knows that she cannot trust his advice—and because Sirius thinks it is a great idea, she has doubts about her own plan.

Hermione, moreover, shows a very caring attitude as well. She pays close attention to Harry and how he is feeling, especially because she knows that Harry's scar often gives him problems. "'Are you all right?' Hermione asked, close enough now to look into Harry's face. 'You look awful!'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 75). Hermione is also the one who figures out what potion can be used to heal the scars left by Umbridge's quill (that uses one's own blood to write) (Rowling, 2003). Furthermore, Hermione's caring attitude is demonstrated throughout the series through the use of such words as "concerned," "worried," et cetera.

Nevertheless, Hermione's caring is illustrated most clearly by her attitude towards Ron and Harry in *DH.* When the Death Eaters attack the Burrow during Bill and Fleur's wedding, it turns out that Hermione has already packed everything they need, even including the boys' clothes. In the days leading up to the wedding, she takes the boys' things so she can pack it:

> "I'll pack these for you," Hermione said brightly, taking Harry's presents out of his arms as the three of them headed back upstairs. "I'm nearly done, I'm just waiting for the rest of your pants to come out of the wash, Ron–" [Rowling, 2007, p. 98].

In the *Harry Potter* novels, Hermione is often described in maternal terms. Harry and Ron often think she is quite strict. In *OotP,* she even is explicitly likened to Mrs. Weasley: "'What do you think about this?' Hermione demanded of Ron, and Harry was reminded irresistibly of Mrs Weasley appealing to her husband during Harry's first dinner in Grimmauld Place" (Rowling, 2003, p. 580). This use of maternal terms resonates with the sub-theme of ethics of care, called maternal thinking (Ruddick,

1989), which takes the care of a mother for her children as a starting point. This is also illustrated by Noddings' concept of natural caring.

ENDING OPPRESSION: TACKLING INEQUALITY

Apart from ethics of care, feminist ethics also consists of a group of theorists whose ethics can best be described as status-oriented feminist ethics (Tong & Williams, 2011). The focus of this group is mainly on issues of power, and how inequality and oppression can impact ethics. Instead of arguing for the primacy of care, the perspective of the group of theorists is that care cannot exist without justice. Although the opinions are divided over whether care and justice can exist side by side, or whether justice precedes care, or whether justice and care are mutually dependent, they do agree that justice cannot just be discarded (Held, 1995). In this section, I will explore how Hermione's ethics can also be seen as feminist from the status-oriented perspective; also, I will show how Hermione's case demonstrates the possible limits of care.

As we have already seen, the Potterverse is characterized by a widespread gender equality that reaches across the domains of education, sports, the Ministry of Magic, evil, and the fight against evil (Gladstein, 2004). In the context of this widespread gender equality, I have posed the question to what extent Hermione can still be called a feminist, if the social context in which she finds herself is already characterized by gender equality. The first part of an answer to my question could be found in the previous section, where I argued that equality does not necessarily equate to sameness, and that therefore paying attention to distinguishing elements in moral reasoning can also be called feminist.

In this section, I will explore the second part of my answer, and I will argue that feminism does not necessarily *begin* at gender equality, and it does not necessarily *stop* there either. Feminism is about more than striving for gender equality—although gender equality can be called one of feminism's main goals. One of the other goals of feminist ethics is to fight oppression; this includes oppression of women, but also of people who can be characterized as "other" in different ways, such as disabled people, or people of color: "[f]feminist ethics is one which clarifies the moral legitimacy and necessity of the kinds of social, political, and personal changes that feminism demands in order to end male domination, or *perhaps to end domination generally*" (emphasis added) (Walker, 1989, p. 15). In short, gender equality is a goal of feminism, but eradicating other forms of inequality is another goal.

Although there are no real issues with gender equality in the Magical society, there are some equality issues between wizards and other "species," as William P. Macneil demonstrates in his article, "Kidlit as Law-and-Lit: Harry Potter and the Scales of Justice." In this article, Macneil argues that different forms of oppression, such as racism, gender inequality, and other forms of discrimination, characterize the relation between humans and other species. Macneil illustrates his argument by looking at the position and treatment of house elves. In fact, he goes as far as questioning whether it would be a good idea to fight against Voldemort and save the magical society as it stands (Macneil, 2002).

Already in one of the first novels, Draco Malfoy makes clear that some magical people do not look too favorably upon witches and wizards whose parents are Muggles, when he calls Hermione a Mudblood (Rowling, 1998). Although Hogwarts is ethnically and racially quite diverse, and discrimination on the basis of race does not seem to occur (at least, insofar as we can tell from the books), the hatred of children with Muggle parents is quite palpable. Therefore, emphasis on the blood status of wizards can be read as displaced racism.

Hermione herself becomes one of the victims of this policy. First, in *CoS,* when she is found in the hallway after having seen the Basilisk, there is a rumor that the creature that lives in the Chamber of Secrets only attacks children with Muggle parents (Rowling, 1998). Later, after the return of Voldemort, Hermione's status as a child of Muggle parents makes her acutely aware of the potential danger of the regime—for example, in *GoF*, when the Death Eaters have attacked the Muggles and Draco Malfoy points out that Hermione has to be careful about how she behaves:

> "Granger, they're after *Muggles,"* said Malfoy. "D'you want to be showing off your knickers in mid-air? Because if you do, hang around ... they're moving this way, and it would give us all a laugh." "Hermione's a witch," Harry snarled. "Have it your own way, Potter," said Malfoy, grinning maliciously. "If you think they can't spot a Mudblood, stay where you are" [Rowling, 2001, p. 110].

Initially, however, Hermione's feminist activities to end oppression and inequality are not so much aimed at wizards with Muggle parents, but rather at house elf activism, one of the other groups that occupy an unequal position in the Potterverse. Hermione is shocked when she sees how Barty Crouch, Senior treats Winky, his house elf, but she is possibly even more shocked when she realizes that it is seen as normal by the pureblood wizards (Rowling, 2001). Her response is to start the S.P.E.W., the Society for the Protection of Elvish Welfare. Hermione's house elf activism is in many ways structured by feminist arguments. First of all, she strives for equality between wizards

and house elves. As we have seen, a focus on (gender) equality is a classic goal of feminism. Moreover, even though we are not talking about gender equality here, but about equality between humans and non-humans, it is still congruent with Margaret Walker's argument that feminist ethics is aimed at eradicating all domination and oppression.

Conversely, Hermione's activism does not really belong to the care-oriented perspectives on feminist ethics, as there is not really any personal relationship between Hermione and the house elves, in which Hermione's behavior could be interpreted as care. Instead of personal relationships being at stake, the main issue in the house elf activism is power inequality, which is also the central concern of status-oriented feminist ethics. The S.P.E.W.'s goal of allowing house elves to use a wand is one step in ending the oppression. With a wand, the house elves would be seen as similar and equal to wizards.

Another one of the S.P.E.W's goals is to get a house elf into Ministry of Magic's Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, to enhance the political representation of the house elves. This is once again a goal with which feminists are quite familiar. Political representation was one of the very first feminist spear points. Striving for political representation can also be read as a feminist argument in a non-historical way. The house elves usually do house work, cooking, cleaning, and other tasks that are traditionally seen as women's work. Women's work, in this perspective, takes place in the so-called private sphere, whereas men's work is located in the public sphere. Politics is one activity that is located squarely in the public sphere (Elshtain, 1987). By striving for political representation, what one is trying to do is to transgress the boundary, the public/private divide, between women's and men's work, and as such prevent women (or house elves, for that matter) from being stuck in the kitchen.

Later, Hermione discovers that Hogwarts also employs house elves, something that is not mentioned in *Hogwarts, a History*. She comments that it is censured—that the house elves have been written out of history. A similar argument can be found in feminist approaches to history, where it is argued that women's experiences are not adequately represented in history writing (Munslow, 2006, p. 244). Only when there is an adequate representation of women's experiences in history is it possible to take women into account when making decisions about morality—you can only take people's problems into account when you know what these problems actually are.

The final action point of the S.P.E.W. is for house elves to get decent wages and good working circumstances, because at this stage, the house elves are owned by the families they serve. In *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight*

Against It, Sheila Rowbotham examines underreported elements of women's history, and specifically the impact that early capitalism had on women. She argues that:

> [c]apitalism brought new relationships of property and domination. It brought into being a class which did not own the means of production, "free" laborers who had to sell their labor power on the market. It started to dissolve all previous forms of ownership. But men still owned their women body and soul after they themselves ceased to be the property of other men. Men continued to own and control female creative capacity in the family and to assume that the subordination of women in society was just and natural [...] [Rowbotham, 1977, p. ix].

Although we cannot trace back the origins of the house elf oppression from the *Harry Potter* novels, it is possible to make the claim that women found themselves in much the same situation during early capitalism as the house elves find themselves in. As I have argued throughout this text, the wizarding society is remarkably equal, at least where wizards are concerned—no wizard is owned by another wizard, (the Death Eaters maybe being an exception), just as Rowbotham remarks about the end of the feudal system. This equality does not stretch to the situation of house elves and other non-human creatures. The house elves, and their labor, are still owned by wizards, as Rowbotham remarks about women: "[b]ut men still owned women body and soul..." (Rowbotham, 1977, p. ix).

Summarizing, Hermione's critique of the house elves' position is developed along similar lines of feminist ethical theories that criticize practices that prolong women's oppression (Tong & Williams, 2011).

However, an argument can also be made that the S.P.E.W. is, in fact, antithetical to feminism, a point eloquently argued by Rachel McCarthy James on her blog, Deeply Problematic. She argues that the S.P.E.W. is deeply problematic because it has been established by a *human* (Hermione) and not by a house elf. The oppression the house elves experience is not Hermione's; she occupies a privileged position vis-à-vis the house elves, and in trying to initiate *their* struggle for liberation—against the wishes of most house elves—she transgresses her privilege, and denies the house elves their agency. At a certain point, Hermione even seems to resort to the use of force, leaving knitwear in the Gryffindor rooms, so as to free unsuspecting house elves. All this time, she does not listen to what the elves themselves want (McCarthy James, 2011).

To a certain extent, this is a fair point to make. Trying to free the elves by force, by hiding knitwear so that an unsuspecting house elf might take it up, is not the right way to go about liberation. It would be fair to admit that, especially at first, Hermione might be

a bit too engaged in the S.P.E.W., and fails to take the wishes of the house elves into account.

Nevertheless, we should not leave it at that. The novels themselves contain some elements that make that we cannot completely denounce the S.P.E.W. as a feminist effort. Firstly, the house elves' response to Hermione's knitwear campaign is especially interesting in this context. From Dobby's story line in *CoS,* we learned that house elves have to do what they have been ordered to do; if they ignore an order, they have to punish themselves. Now, in *OotP,* Dobby tells Harry that he has to clean the Gryffindor rooms all by himself because the other house elves refuse to do this, because they are afraid of accidentally touching Hermione's knitted hats and scarves. However, we never hear about Hogwarts house elves en masse punishing themselves because they ignored an order (cleaning the rooms), so we can only conclude that they have not been *ordered* to clean the rooms, but instead do so voluntarily.

Moreover, the effectiveness of Hermione's tactic of hiding knitwear is also doubtful. In *CoS,* Dobby told Harry that the only way an elf can be freed is when his or her owner gives them clothes—not someone else. So, as the house elves of Hogwarts are not owned by Hermione, or by any of Hogwarts' pupils, Hermione's actions cannot free the house elves; therefore, they cannot really be seen as an act of violence. At most, Hermione's behavior, which might partially result from ignorance (after all, she has only seen a house elf for the first time in *GoF,* when she is fifteen or sixteen), are insulting: comparable to throwing water balloons and expecting them to have the effect of cannonballs. This does *not* mean, of course, that she is doing the right thing, but what it *does* mean is that the "force" argument for weakening the feminist slant of the S.P.E.W. is not completely effective and convincing.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the S.P.E.W. is not only aimed at house elves. In many ways, it is a consciousness-raising movement that tries to bring into effect a different point of view in the wizarding community, a movement that tries to change the environment. The house elves, whose work has almost never been valued because it is intrinsically valuable, but rather because it is free and easy for wizards, do not know a society in which they are also seen as beings whose intrinsic value matters. The S.P.E.W. tries to bring this respect about, and regardless of whether or not the house elves will eventually be—or demand—pay and freedom, the S.P.E.W.'s striving for general respect is a valid feminist goal in itself. Moreover, with respect to this goal, it does not matter that Hermione speaks from a privileged position, because she uses her privilege not to speak for the elves, but to make people listen to them.

Justice Versus Care

Having discussed both the care-oriented as well as the status-oriented approaches to feminist ethics, we have seen that Hermione's ethics contain elements of both perspectives. Within feminist ethics, however, there is a debate about how justice—ending inequality on multiple fronts—and care should relate to each other. As Virginia Held summarizes the debate:

> A series of questions can be raised about these central concepts of justice and care: Are they compatible? Are they alternative and compatible ways of interpreting the same moral situations, and if so, how can we decide which should guide us? Are care and justice both indispensable for moral understanding? Should care supplement justice, or justice supplement care—is one or the other the more fundamental? [...] [Held, 1995, p. 2].

Many status-oriented feminists would argue that care cannot exist without justice—justice becomes a condition for the proper execution of care, in this perspective. This argument can be illustrated with reference to Hermione's ethics. One criticism of the status-oriented perspectives on the care perspectives is that women's care may just be the result of centuries of patriarchal indoctrination, and that by focusing on women's care in ethical theory, it only reinforces this bias. Moreover, focusing on care can only too easily change into self-sacrifice on women's part, especially when it takes place in a context where oppression is not eradicated (Friedman, 1995, p. 67). In *DH*, Hermione shows that she is aware of the pitfall of self-sacrifice, when she gets into a fight with Ron over who does the cooking:

> "Harry caught the fish and I did my best with it! I notice I'm always the one who ends up sorting out the food; because I'm a *girl*, I suppose!" "No, it's because you're supposed to be the best at magic" shot back Ron [Rowling, 2007, p. 241].

Although Hermione has shown throughout the books to have a very caring attitude, she approaches it with a critical stance and does net let care become an avenue for oppression.

The need to see justice as a condition for care can be illustrated in a second way. As we have seen in the description of Nell Noddings' ethics of care, Noddings accords a primacy to relationships in her description of the ethical ideal, and anyone who breaks a relationship becomes ethically diminished (Noddings, 1995). This, however, is exactly what Hermione is forced to do. In *DH*, she tells Harry and Ron that she modified her parents' memories:

> I've also modified my parents' memories so that they're convinced they're really called Wendell and Monica Wilkins, and that their life's ambition is to move to Australia, which they have now done. That's to make it more difficult for Voldemort to track them down and interrogate them about me—or you [Harry], because unfortunately, I've told them quite a bit about you. [...] Wendell and Monica Wilkins don't know that they've got a daughter, you see [Rowling, 2007, p. 84].

Here, Hermione's blood status—one of the sources of her oppression—plays a large role. If Hermione's parents had been wizards, there would not have been a need for Hermione to break her relationship with them to such an extent that she needed to erase herself from their memories—hypothetically, they would have been able to defend themselves, or join the Order of the Phoenix. Now, however, just by being Muggles, they are in danger. This also makes clear that had Hermione stayed with her parents, she would have put them in danger even more. Here, we can clearly see an inadequacy of Noddings' ethics of care. If Hermione had adhered to Noddings' ethical ideal and its injunction not to break relationships, she would have put her parents in danger. The only way she can possibly solve the situation is by removing herself from the relationship, which carries the risk that she will never have a relationship with her parents again, and help Harry destroy Voldemort and his Death Eaters. In short, in this case, care is not possible in the absence of justice.

In the end, much of the narrative of the Harry Potter novels can be read as a quest for justice. Personal justice—for Harry, but also for Hermione; equality—between humans and non-humans; and freedom of fear, both for wizards and Muggles. In his article, William Macneil poses the question whether or not a society that is characterized by so much inequality should be saved (Macneil, 2002, p. 561). (Note: Macneil wrote his article after the fourth installment, *GoF*, had just been published.) Here, I want to give an answer to that question, an answer that puts Hermione's feminist ethics and house elf activism in a broader perspective.

Macneil uses as his primary example of the injustice of the magical society the house elf inequality, which also was the central concern of Hermione's S.P.E.W. At first glance, Hermione's activism seems to be only a small, not completely significant part of the narrative. However, I want to suggest the opposite. In the novels, one of the main symbols of house elf oppression has been the Fountain of Magical Unity, in the Atrium of the Ministry of Magic; the fountain depicted the hierarchy of the magical world, with the house elves and other non-human creatures looking up to the wizards. Near the end of *OotP,* the fountain is destroyed in the duel between Voldemort and Dumbledore. The moment of destruction of the fountain coincides with the open return of Voldemort, and as such the beginning of a new order. Therefore, the destruction of the Fountain of

Magical Unity implies on a metaphorical level that the unity is destroyed—however, there has never been true unity, because the house elves and other creatures have been oppressed. As Dumbledore says to Harry: "'The fountain we destroyed tonight told a lie. We wizards have mistreated and abused our fellows for too long, and we are now reaping our reward'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 735). The destruction of the fountain therefore implies that the lie of unity—and the reality of oppression—has been destroyed, and that the way is open to get rid of the oppression along the same lines that Harry has to fight Voldemort.

And indeed, after Harry has defeated Voldemort, magical harmony seems to have ensued almost immediately:

> McGonagall had replaced the house tables, but nobody was sitting according to house anymore: all were jumbled together, teachers and pupils, ghosts and parents, centaurs and house-elves, and Firenze lay recovering in a corner and Grawp peered in through a smashed window, and people were throwing food into his laughing mouth [Rowling, 2007].

Put in this context, Hermione's house-elf activism takes on added meaning: it is part of, and aimed at the same goal, as Harry's struggle against Voldemort, namely, creating real justice and unity.

Conclusion

This essay has focused on the question whether or not Hermione Granger can still be called a feminist even though the Potterverse is characterized by far-reaching gender equality. First, the actual extent of the gender equality in the world of the *Harry Potter* novels was demonstrated to reach from areas of life that included the work place, education, and sports to the Order of the Phoenix, and evil/the Death Eaters. Across all these social spheres, there is no remarkable difference between women and men. To what extent, then, can Hermione still be called a feminist?

I have argued that despite the gender equality of the Potterverse, it is still possible to call Hermione a feminist. First of all, striving for gender equality is not the only goal of feminism, and this type of feminism, liberal feminism, is not the only branch of feminist theory either. Instead of taking this type of equality feminism as a starting point, I have proposed to look at Hermione's ethics instead, as these contain many elements of feminist ethics.

Within feminist ethics, there are also different theoretical positions, which can, globally, be divided into care-oriented perspectives and status-oriented perspectives. Throughout the essay, I have shown that Hermione's ethics are characterized by elements of both perspectives. Hermione's house elf activism is a primary example of her concern for the oppressed, and thereby of the status-oriented perspectives on feminist ethics. Her house elf activism is also part of the larger project of defeating Voldemort and ending equality generally. Hermione, however, has also shown herself to be a very caring personality, who takes relationships and context into account in her appreciation of moral questions. Therefore, Hermione's ethics are characterized by both care and justice. Finally, however, I have shown that in some cases, justice can be a prerequisite for proper care.

Therefore, Hermione's actions, as well as her narrative arc, show us Muggles an important insight into feminist ethics and the debate between care and justice perspectives. The care perspective has important elements, and offers a refreshing view on moral questions. However, with an eye on the fact that often, some degree of justice and lack of oppression is necessary, care-oriented feminist ethics should also take its own demand for a consideration of contextual factors into account in order to be able to decide when care and maintaining relationships are the appropriate response, and when a quest for justice might be needed first.

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The Muggle Hunt

ELIZABETH DE LA TORRE

Before Hermione Granger, the heroine, and Hogwarts existed, Muggles—non-magical people—and wizards used to live on the same land as neighbors. Yet, European Muggles of elite status (i.e., monarchs and religious leaders) began to fear the possible existence of magic. They were "completely ignorant of the true nature of magic and wizards," and this ignorance was "typical of a particular type of Muggle thinking" (Rowling 2008, 81–82). Since elite European Muggles chose not to seek education on the "nature of magic and wizards," they persisted in their fear of magic. This fear became typical, and the ignorance regarding magic spread through the Muggle population. Albus Dumbledore, Hogwarts' Headmaster, in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* writes that the torture and execution of witches and wizards was gaining popularity in the early fifteenth century. Due to this precedent, many witches and wizards begin to think, "Let the Muggles manage without us" (Rowling 2008, 13–14). They separate from the Muggles, creating a world of their own and enacted a law called the "International Statutes of Wizarding Secrecy in 1689" (Rowling 2008, 13–14). This law states that no witches or wizards are allowed to perform magic in front of or near Muggles.

Dumbledore hints that some witches and wizards magically helped their fellow Muggles before the law passed and stopped as Muggles began misinterpreting this helpfulness as maliciousness. Since the Muggles misunderstood, the local justice brought these helpful witches and wizards to trial and sentenced them to death. Hence, this undue persecution forced the witches and wizards to hide their magical talents from their Muggle neighbors. So began the slow separation of Muggles and wizardkind. The great European Witch Hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century completely severed wizardkind from their "non-magical brethren" for the protection of all magical users. This lead to the creation of the 1689 law.

This separation would prompt four great witches and wizards to build Hogwarts. When wizards could not utilize their magic in the presence of Muggles, it became difficult for all magical parents to teach their children, and the magical children of Muggle parentage, to use magic. For this reason, "Hogwarts itself was founded in order to create a safe haven for wizards from the persecuting Muggles in the Middle Ages" (Ostry 2003, 92). The four great witches and wizards built the institution for the teaching of magic without the fear of Muggle persecution. The founders became

immortalized in “the four school Houses ... named after them: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin” (Rowling 1999a, 150). According to Professor Binns, the Hogwarts history of magic teacher, a disagreement began between Slytherin and the other three witches and wizard. Slytherin wanted the learning of magic taught to students of all magical families. He believed that any child with a Muggle parent was suspect (Rowling 1999a, 150).

Elite European Muggles’ fear of magic cultivated mistrust. Consequently, discord between Slytherin and the other three wizards began. He believed that students with Muggle parents would betray the school to Muggle witch hunters. As a preventative measure, he wanted only students from all-magical families. This would have been a reasonable argument if he did not have a seething hatred for Muggles and their magical offspring. Slytherin’s hatred for Muggles resulted in the creation of a chamber that sheltered a monster meant to hurt the magical children of Muggles. His mistrust and dislike of “students of Muggle parentage” also created an elitist mentality among “all-magical families” (Rowling 1999a, 130).

Just as elite European men targeted mostly women, Slytherin’s hatred began the prejudice against the Muggle and Muggle-born—magical children from non-magical parents—race among the Pure-blood witches and wizards. The European Witch Hunts were generally gender biased because Catholic leaders believed that “when a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil” (Kramer 1988, 43) and “a witch [was] depraved through sin, therefore the cause of it [was] not the devil but human will” (Kramer 1988, 31). Catholics believed women harbored evil thoughts when left to their own devices (i.e., they could not help being evil). The will of women forced them to become “depraved through sin” naturally, and affected the will of men to sin. Since women infected the men, there were very few males executed for witchcraft. At this point, elite European Muggles and elite Pure-bloods differed in their thinking. The Muggles’ war on magic centered on gender targeting feminist women, while the Pure-bloods’ conflict centered, and still does, on race: the race of Pure-blood witches and wizards against Muggle-born witches and wizards (Ostry 2003, 92). This turbulent past between elite European Muggles and elite Pure-bloods continues, to a certain extent, into the present. It taints Hermione’s life, making it difficult for her debut into the Wizarding world while the past continues to plague her until the vicious cycle ultimately ends. Her hardships begin with her personal characteristics. It would seem that the general feminist traits targeting women as witches in the Muggle world would have the Wizarding world admire those same general feminist traits. Ironically, the opposite proves true. Though most contemporary Muggles are unlikely to believe in witches and wizards, they tolerate the possibility of magic and still loath the unexplained. The Dursleys emphatically express this sentiment. They view anything that seems “unDursleyish” (Rowling 1999b, 2), or not normal, as something to dislike or avoid. Hence, Harry’s Aunt Petunia’s strong

dislike for Harry's mother, Lilly. Petunia considered Lilly, her sister, abnormal because Lilly, aside from her magical abilities, displayed the traits of a witch that "medieval" (Rowling 1999b, 2) Muggles would consider undesirable. This implies that Muggles who know of the existence of witches and wizards display a highly unenlightened attitude. Hermione Granger also shares several of the traits that would ostracize her in contemporary Muggle society. She shares the very same characteristics with her feminist sister witches from the past.

Most of the women put to death exhibited several specific traits. *The Malleus Maleficarum* (i.e., *The Witch's Hammer*), a definitive guide for sixteenth and seventeenth century witch hunters, described these traits as "three general vices" that "have special dominion over wicked women, namely, infidelity, ambition, and lust" (Kramer 1988, 47). They caught a few women possessing the negative aforementioned traits. Yet, many women also exhibited opposite, positive characteristics to those described. They include "unattractive" (Barstow 1994, 16) women, a midwife or healer (Barstow 1994, 18), "uppity women—women given to speaking out, to a bold tongue and independent spirit" (Barstow 1994, 27). Hermione possesses all these attributes to a certain degree. While not blatantly ugly, she does have some physical aspects that she and other wizards consider undesirable: her "bushy brown hair, and rather large front teeth" (Rowling 1999b, 105). Her classmates and friends never consider her attractive until she corrects these physical flaws. In *GoF*, Ron does not recognize Hermione's splendor until he watches Victor Krum take her hand and escort her into the ballroom for the winter dance. On the day of the dance, Hermione uses magic to fix her teeth and hair, which suddenly attracts Ron's notice (Rowling 2002, 400).

Midwives and healers performed services elite Europeans considered magical. The practices of midwives and healers were not magical, but practical and essential for their survival in a patriarchal world without the protection of a husband or male family relation. They were feminists by necessity. However, Hermione's talents in the magical arts place her in the same category as the midwives and healers. She was born to non-magical parents who raised her. Therefore, she lacks the advantages of children from all magical-parents who grew up in a magical environment. The success in her talents "is a product of her intellect, hard work, and persistence" (Gladstein 2008, 52). She studies constantly to become a competent witch. The absence of a magical background causes her to adopt a feminist mentality in her need to prove her competency to her classmates. Her love of reading benefits Harry and Ron since "her relentless reading often puts her in position to provide key pieces of information" (Gladstein 2008, 52). Hermione's talents in reading and academics mold her into an invaluable friend to Harry and Ron.

In *SS*, the trio initially meets. Harry and Ron thought of Hermione as extremely annoying. They preferred to avoid her and her perceived "uppity" personality.

Hermione possesses “a bossy sort of voice” and is seemingly smug in telling them that she “learned all [her] course books by heart” (Rowling 1999b, 105–106) on the Hogwarts train before they arrive at school for their first year. She is, in actuality, displaying modesty to Harry and Ron. Through her capabilities as a witch, she “never feels unworthy” among her classmates or needs to feel that “she has earned” the respect of her classmates “through her hard work” (Gladstein 2008, 52). Meeting the famous Harry Potter and Ron Weasley, a classmate from an all-magical family, for the first time compels Hermione to confirm her individual equality. Since she is used to the gender biased view regarding women as inferior in the Muggle world, she unconsciously adopts a feminist approach of asserting her competency in the Wizarding world where gender differences do not matter. She is unaware of the magnitude of the underlying animosity elite witches and wizards harbor against Muggle-borns. Unfortunately, Harry and Ron mistake her attempts at equality as an attempt to display her superiority. Other classmates shared this misunderstanding, which led to her preliminary isolation.

Hermione’s first year attending Hogwarts does not begin as well as it did for Harry and Ron. Her classmates struggle to understand her personality and feel a little jealous of her talents. They call her a know-it-all because she impresses the teachers and provides unwanted advise with her “bossy voice.” Students find her tone and her stringent proclivities irritating so she becomes “a nightmare” (Rowling 1999b, 172) to them. Sadly, these judgments and misunderstandings from her classmates cause Hermione to have “no friends” (Rowling 1999b, 172). While her feminist need to assert her competency did not garner her any friends, one instance of loyalty and rule-breaking did reward her with two life-time friends. In *SS*, on Halloween night, Harry and Ron unknowingly trap Hermione in the girl’s bathroom with a mountain troll. After they reluctantly save her, she lies to the teachers “pretending” she broke the rules “to get them out of trouble” (Rowling 1999b, 178). That all-important lie ultimately ties the trio together since “there are some things you can[not] share without ... ending up liking each other, and knocking out a twelve-foot mountain troll is one of them” (Rowling 1999b, 179). The friendship between the three continues to grow. Hermione becomes an integral member of the group as a result. She also continues in the footsteps of the feminist Muggle witches through this friendship.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, accused witches were important members of their community. European townspeople relied on them for magical healing and advice (Barstow 1994, 29). The town community “turned *to* witches as well as turned *on* them” (Barstow 1994, 29) and harbored no loyalty towards them. Before the accusations began, townspeople relied on these same women to maintain the physical, mental, and social health of the community. When witch hunters passed through town, the people readily betrayed their witches. Harry and Ron also rely on Hermione for minor healing. Yet, her role is far greater in their relationship because she provides her knowledge in

the battle against Voldemort and emotional fortitude to Harry and Ron. Her role is "a reversal of the popular stereotype that the male is rational and the female is emotional. Harry and Ron are sometimes Masses of emotions, while Hermione is the calm voice of reason" (Gladstein 2008, 55). Stopping the boys from panic attacks is Hermione's purpose in the group, and one of her more important roles. Without her, they are virtually lost. In *CoS*, the basilisk petrifies Hermione. Afterwards, Ron feels that "Hermione [will] probably have all the answers when [the teachers] wake her up" (Rowling 1999a, 285). Hermione provides crucial answers to Harry and Ron's major problems. Although indisposed, she still manages to help them with her clues: a mirror in her hand and the word "pipes" written on a torn out dictionary page with the definition for *basilisk*. In addition, Hermione conveys a dose of courage when Harry and Ron become frightened. When they doubt the wisdom of ingesting the polyjuice potion for fear of a teacher catching them, Hermione bluntly tells them if they want to be cowards, it is fine with her. She definitely does not like to break rules except there are situations that are far worse than rule breaking (Rowling 1999a, 165). Hermione refuses to act cowardly when lives are at risk. Hermione religiously follows the school rules and willingly breaks them for a worthy cause. It is far too late for them to back out of their plan when they are possibly close to finding the heir of Slytherin.

Hermione may seem bossy and an incurable know-it-all. Yet, Harry and Ron will be lost without her. She proves repeatedly that she "is not only just as good as one of the boys; she is often better than they" (Gladstein 2008, 55). While Hermione establishes herself as a most competent witch, she has very few friends outside of Harry and Ron. In *PoA*, when feelings become tense between the trio, Harry and Ron stick together—as boys often do—and ostracize Hermione from their inner circle. Harry mysteriously receives a Firebolt to replace his broken broom. Through her cautious and protective instincts, Hermione suspects that notorious Sirius Black jinxed the Firebolt. Subsequently, she informs a teacher of her suspicions, which leads to that teacher dismantling the broom. As a result, Harry and Ron show antipathy towards Hermione. She did not seek solace with other classmates, which gives the appearance that the other classmates are more acquaintances than friends to her. Instead, she seeks the company of Hagrid and continues to do so until Harry and Ron forgive her. Without Harry and Ron she is outside the boundaries of Wizarding society just as past Muggle witches lived outside the boundaries of their communities. Hermione instinctively seeks out the only friend left to her who is as "different" as she and happens to live outside the castle walls. After, resolving the misunderstandings, Harry and Ron grow to appreciate Hermione's "bold tongue and independent spirit." The very spirit that causes Hermione to "slap[] Malfoy across the face with all the strength she could muster" (Rowling 2001, 293) that elicits admiration from her friends and a little from her enemies as well. Despite a few arguments, Harry and Ron remain loyal to Hermione. This contrasts with the European Muggle townspeople who betrayed their own witches.

Hermione easily overcomes her hardships between her classmates and her characteristics through her loyalty to them and develops the ability to occasionally break the rules. The rest of her difficulties originate from a deep seeded hatred and superiority. Just as there are a few contemporary Muggles who express their fear and dislike of witches and wizards, the elite Pure-blood witches and wizards have been doing the same through magical pranks. They enchant ordinary Muggle items for the sport of "Muggle-baiting" (Rowling 1999b, 38). Arthur Weasley, Head of the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office, describes one such instance. Mischievous witches and wizards like to sell shrinking keys to Muggles, causing the Muggles great distress when they need the key. The Muggles rationalize this phenomenon saying they lost it. Their stubbornness in discrediting magic makes it hard to pursue the guilty magical party. This encourages the witches and wizards to enchant more items (Rowling 1999b, 38). Arthur's job includes unjinxing Muggle items and bringing the guilty magical party to justice. His job becomes difficult when contemporary Muggles' disbelief in magic leads them to ignore the obvious disregarding it as ridiculously improbable.

Meanwhile, Pure-bloods express open hostility against Muggle-borns. The Muggle world includes various levels of financial status. In contrast, the Wizarding world contains levels of race status in which witches and wizards of all magic families hold the highest status. This includes half-bloods (i.e., children who possessing one magical parent). In addition, there are other "magical creatures who are deemed to have near-human intelligence" (Rowling 2004, 754) and finally, house elves. Muggle-borns before Voldemort's rule held "no status in the Wizarding world" (Ostry 2003, 91). The elite witches and wizards hold status at the highest societal level and importance. They prefer to ignore the existence of worthless Muggle-borns by refusing them any status in their society. Yet, lacking social status subjects Muggle-borns to blatant prejudice, which emphasizes the importance of bloodlines. In *CoS*, when Hermione enters a disagreement between the Gryffindor and Slytherin Quidditch teams, Draco Malfoy tells her, "No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood" (Rowling 1999b, 112). Draco's elitist outburst informs Hermione that elite Pure-bloods consider her a nobody in the Wizarding world because her blood is impure compared to his. The derogatory term *Mudblood* is "about the most insulting thing he could think of" (Rowling 1999b, 115) implying that the very existence of Muggle-borns pollute the "pureness" of Wizard blood. As the prejudice of the witch and wizard elitists mirrors the prejudice of Muggles against the magically inclined, witches and wizards likely received the idea for the derogatory term from Muggles. Medieval Muggles believed that witches "disturb[ed] the elements and confound[ed] the minds of men, and without any venomous drought, but merely by virtue of incantations, destroy souls, etc." (Kramer 1988, 32). Witches contaminated the environment and polluted "the minds of men" with their unnatural "incantations." Medieval European Muggles considered the magic of

witches impure, just as elite contemporary witches and wizards consider the blood of Muggle-borns impure.

Slytherin students notoriously maintain an obsession with bloodline purity since the very house of Slytherin easily accepts ambitious Pure-blood students and is mostly populated by the very students who place importance in blood. Meanwhile, those of impure blood gravitate toward the other houses (Hopkins 2003, 26). A Slytherin student symbolizes the embodiment of elite ambition. Therefore, the sorting hat places an ambitious Pure-blood student in Slytherin House. This is evident in Draco Malfoy's obsession with learning the names of witches and wizards he meets. Consequently, he "judges people by their surnames" that is "evidence of their bloodlines" (Hopkins 2003, 25). If the student lacks a suitably elite surname, Draco looks upon them with hollow mediocrity. For the blood traitors—Pure-bloods who cannot or do not care about bloodlines—and most Muggle-borns, the sorting hat places them in one of the other three houses, since they lack the relentless and vicious ambition of elite Pure-bloods and half-bloods in denial of their Muggle blood. The sorting hat understandably places Hermione in Gryffindor House, a house for the courageous.

Some witches and wizards with "pure" bloodlines differ with the sentiments of the elite witches and wizards. These witches and wizards challenged the racist notion of their comrades and verbally fought against them. This perceived betrayal of Wizarding lineage caused stereotyping the defenders of Muggle-borns. Sixteenth and seventeenth century European philosophers ignored the beliefs of their elite Muggle brothers. Judith Ochshorn (1994) noted that philosophers used to utilize reason as a means of correcting social injustice. Yet, they purposely neglected to consider the treatment of women unjust. Philosophers accused the church as being unreasonable for their belief in magic. However, they did not challenge the church on the subject of women nor how the church relates women to superstitious matters. Anything subjects pertaining to the church and women philosophers left alone (Ochshorn 101). Over time, philosophers believed the Catholic Church became unreasonable in their views that only concerned magic. They used logic as a means to attack the church regarding their beliefs on the existence of magic. Subsequently, the philosophers remained safe from attracting the interests of the Inquisition. The philosophers did not attack the church's obvious patriarchal misconceptions regarding situational feminist women—self-sufficient women who lack male protection—and their horrendous treatment of these women because the philosophers were protecting themselves. They were adverse to the idea of suffering persecution in defense of women.

Pro-Muggle witches and wizards held no such fear of their elite counterparts. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the elite witches and wizards were unsympathetic to the persecution of Pro-Muggle witches and wizards. They relied on

verbal debasement. Magical elitists considered "any witch or wizard who chose to fraternize with Muggles became suspect, even an outcast to his or her own community" (Rowling 2008, 15). They insulted Pro-Muggle witches and wizards by calling them "such fruity epithets as 'Mudwallower,' 'Dunglicker' and 'Scumsucker'" and Pure-bloods considered their magic as "weak or inferior" (Rowling 2008, 15). Witches and wizards suffered the same verbal persecution from Pure-bloods in the form of derogatory slurs and contrived stereotypes. They purported that Muggle-supporters had inferior magic to the Muggle-haters. Brutus Malfoy, one of the most influential wizards of that era, encouraged such stereotypical thinking in "*Warlock at War*" (Rowling 2008, 16), his slanderous anti–Muggle propaganda periodical. The Malfoys have a long history of Muggle-hating actions. Most members of the Weasley family in the past have been Muggle-loving witches and wizards. In the present, Lucius Malfoy and Arthur Weasley wage an internal war within the Ministry of Magic. Lucius attempts to thwart Arthur's plans in passing Muggle protection laws. His obvious attempt at keeping the love of Muggle-baiting alive. As a passive-aggressive attack on Arthur, Lucius sneaks Voldemort's cursed diary into the possessions of Ginny Weasley, Arthur's daughter, attempting to damage Weasley's reputation (Rowling 1999a, 336). Afterwards, he reiterates his ancestor's sentiments in saying that "Arthur Weasley loves Muggles so much he should snap his wand in half and go and join them" (Rowling 1999a, 222). To him, the Weasley family is a disgrace with their pro–Muggle mentality. There are also Pro-Muggle witches and wizards who act against the anti–Muggle mentality of their elite family. Dumbledore, a well-known "Mudblood-lover" (Rowling 2002, 165), falls in that category. Yet, he is such a powerful and influential wizard that none of the Pure-bloods would attack him directly or indirectly. Although Dumbledore cannot protect Hermione and other Muggle-born students from vicious slander, he can keep them from physical harm. That same power keeps Voldemort from completely conquering the Wizarding world. After Dumbledore's death, Voldemort successfully overthrows the Ministry of Magic and places all Muggle-borns in danger.

Voldemort's rise to leadership results from his lust for ultimate power rather than a belief in elitist Pure-blood prejudice. Tom Riddle Sr., his Muggle father, blatantly abandoned Tom Riddle Jr., his son, who chose to become Lord Voldemort. Since his Pure-blood mother died in childbirth, her brother, Morfin, should have raised him. Instead, he completely ignored his half-blood nephew. Therefore, Tom Riddle Jr. began his childhood in a Muggle orphanage. Later, Dumbledore found him and placed him in Hogwarts School. As a result of the rejection and abandonment of his family, Voldemort hates Muggles and debases elite Pure-bloods. Elite Pure-bloods are tools for him to easily use and misuse in his personal war. Tom Riddle Sr. abandoned Voldemort and was one of the main causes of Voldemort's hatred towards Muggles. The community in Riddle's village considered the Riddle family "rich, snobbish, and rude, and their grown up son, Tom [Sr.], had been, if anything, worse" (Rowling 2002, 2). Considering

these attributes, Tom Sr. acted worse than the Dursleys, rejecting his own son who displayed anything beyond normal Muggle behavior. That mentality killed the Riddle family. To the Muggles in the town, they died under mysterious circumstances. However, Voldemort killed his Muggle relatives using his Uncle Morfin's wand. In doing so, the Ministry of Magic accused Morfin of the crime and sent him to Azkaban. Tom Riddle Sr.'s ultimate betrayal against his son condemned all Muggles and Muggle-borns, regardless of their innocence. Morfin's actions were no better; yet, he proved his usefulness to Voldemort, his nephew. Hence, Voldemort uses the hatred of elite Pure-bloods against Muggles in his quest to raise a magical army in service to his personal agenda and he named those followers Death Eaters. Unlike his followers, Voldemort is indifferent to the practice of callously murdering Muggles because they are useless to him. He encourages the Pure-bloods in happily tormenting and executing Muggle-borns. Happy Pure-bloods means the continuation of their loyalty to Voldemort. As a talented Muggle-born witch, Hermione could become a Pure-blood sacrifice in a similar fashion to her Muggle peers. Hypothetically, with Hermione's death Voldemort could easily defeat the resistant blood traitors.

Voldemort's control over the Ministry of Magic recreates many of the atrocities that the sixteenth and seventeenth century performed on the witches of that era. In the present, Muggle-borns become victims of the atrocities. Judith Ochshorn (1994) states that "both Catholic and Protestant churches kept their hands 'clean'" encouraging, denunciating, interrogating the accused, and authorizing "torture to get at the 'truth.'" Furthermore, "once the victims' guild was established they were 'relaxed' to the secular arm of the government for punishment" (Ochshorn 96–97). The Elizabethan Era churches drove the Witch Hunts of that society. The priests accused, judged, and tortured witches; then the governing officials performed the execution. After Voldemort establishes total control over the Ministry of Magic, he remands most of the Muggle-born killings to the government Pure-bloods. Therefore, he is free to follow his all-consuming personal agenda—kill Harry Potter. In this way, Elizabethan priests and Voldemort behave in the same manner. They both drive the persecutions of their time. In addition, Voldemort drives the persecution of blood traitors.

With Voldemort's blessing, the elite Pure-bloods create "THE MUGGLE-BORN REGISTRATION COMMISION" (Rowling 2009, 250) within the Ministry of Magic and mass-produce propaganda pamphlets entitled: "MUDBLOODS and the Dangers They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-Blood Society" (Rowling 2009, 248). Although Hermione knows that Voldemort's Death Eaters control the Ministry, she never considers allowing Harry and Ron to infiltrate the Ministry alone in order to remain hidden from the Death Eaters. Instead, she prepares to protect and assist Harry to the best of her ability. In *DH*, Hermione displays the behavior of a true witch in both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds through her ingenuity, selflessness, and intelligence.

When the Death Eaters decimate the Weasley wedding, Hermione, Harry, and Ron flee the ensuing chaos. Hermione displays ingenious forethought because she had "the essentials packed for days [for] a quick getaway" in a small bag with an "Undetectable Extension Charm" (Rowling 2009, 162). She anticipates their need to disappear and survive alone. Furthermore, she suspects that regular bags packed with the necessary "essentials" will hamper a "quick getaway" and long-term concealment. Hermione's ingenuity becomes convenient to their untimely travel.

Her apparent selflessness is a large part of the *Harry Potter* series. Exhibiting ultimate altruism, she walks into the Ministry of Magic with Harry and Ron after they disguise themselves with the use of her Polyjuice potion to retrieve Voldemort's locket. In the guise of Mafalda Hopkirk, Dolores Umbridge's court assistant, Hermione comes within reaching distance of the locket. Unfortunately, she receives a glimpse of the new government's Muggle-born oppression. In the European Witch Hunts, "women and slaves of both sexes fell into many of the same categories in the eyes of early modern European men" (Barstow 1994, 159–160). Women and slaves shared equal status as property from the European men. In the *Harry Potter* series, house-elves exist as slaves to prominent Wizarding families and are ruled by a certain set of laws. The laws state that a house-elf found in possession of a wand can be dismissed from service by the head of the Wizarding family (Rowling 2002, 141). Before Voldemort's control, Muggle-borns held no social status. Afterwards, Muggle-borns and house-elves share the same slave status due to the new set of restrictive laws regarding Muggle-borns. Hermione, appearing as Mafalda, witnesses a trial of Mrs. Cattermole, a Muggle-born witch, and the consequences of a guilty verdict. The trial is chillingly reminiscent of past Muggle witch trials against feminist women. Yet, Mrs. Cattermole's gender is not on trial. The subject of her race stands trial. Mrs. Cattermole's only transgression is possessing "a wand [that] was taken from [her] upon [her] arrival at the Ministry" (Rowling 2009, 260). When Umbridge asks her "from which witch or wizard [she] took" it, Mrs. Cattermole replies that she "didn't []take it from anybody" (Rowling 2009, 260). Mrs. Cattermole received her wand in the same manner as every other witch or wizard received theirs before entering into a Wizarding school: the wand chose her. To Umbridge, it is stealing. Umbridge calls her a liar since "wands only choose witches or wizards," and Mrs. Cattermole is "not a witch" (Rowling 2009, 261). Hence, the Ministry forbids Muggle-borns to own wands. Muggle-borns obviously do not serve Wizarding families. Consequently, they receive far worse punishments. These punishments are almost the equivalent of the torture and death suffered by the feminist women put to death by elite Muggles in the past. Dementors, the sinister guards of Azkaban prison, suck the soul from a Muggle-born immediately following their conviction. In essence, Hermione, though disguised, enters the Ministry and risks her very soul to help Harry in his quest to destroy the locket. Contained within the locket, Voldemort's Horcrux, is a piece of Voldemort's tainted soul. Hermione,

Harry, and Ron barely escape from the Ministry with Voldemort's Death Eaters close behind.

Hermione's intelligence assists the trio in eluding the Snatchers after their daring escape from the Ministry. Snatchers, reminiscent to European Witch Hunters, are "gangs trying to earn gold by rounding up Muggle-borns and blood traitors [because] there's a reward from the Ministry for everyone captured" (Rowling 2009, 382). This implies that Snatchers hunt Muggle-borns for a reward regardless of their registration status. Hermione sets "protective enchantments around the" (Rowling 2009, 272) camp to hide from Death Eaters and Snatchers. Protective enchantments add to the list of reasons Harry values Hermione. She also uses her quick thinking to disguise Harry so that the Snatchers do not recognize him after his capture. Hermione casts a small curse on Harry by "point[ing] her wand ... into his face; there was a bang, a burst of white light, and he buckled in agony, unable to see. He could feel his face swelling rapidly under his hands as heavy footfalls surrounded him" (Rowling 2009, 446). Hermione disfigures his face and minimally hides the scar on his forehead. Her intelligent attempt saves the trio from decisive actions later because Bellatrix Lestrange, Draco Malfoy's aunt, barely identifies Harry. Bellatrix chooses Hermione out of the group of prisoners to torture for answers expressly because she is a Mudblood (Rowling 2009, 463). Then Fenrir Greyback, a Death Eater, imprisons Harry and Ron in the Malfoy Manor cellar. Hermione's friends are forced to listen helplessly while she suffers Bellatrix's torture techniques reminiscent of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. Despite the torture, Hermione continues to assist Harry Potter in defeating Voldemort instead of placing her own safety first.

Hermione Granger is an outstanding witch belonging to both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds. Her talents towards the magical arts lead her to an extraordinary world where the ability to use magic is common. Unfortunately, due to past circumstances beyond her control, she is confronted with the blatant animosity of Pure-bloods, an animosity that began when Muggles—envious and fearful of witches and wizards—decided to persecute helpful magic users. Hermione shares most of her feminist characteristics with sixteenth and seventeenth century European Witches. Those characteristics remain undesirable in the contemporary Muggle world and ironically, the Wizarding world. Yet, these same characteristics cause her to become vital to Harry Potter's continuing survival and Voldemort's ultimate demise. She willingly suffers injustices similar to that of her ancestral sister witches suffered, while breaking a cycle of fear and hatred. Elite European Muggle males unwittingly began their bloody era from fear of the unknown, and nurtured hatred among Wizarding families. Hermione Granger helps break the cycle cultivating a future of peace between both worlds.

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Hermione as Woman

Unstoppable Force

Maternal Power and Feminism

ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

Although the Harry Potter series and its film adaptations focus on the adventures of its eponymous main character, women both living and dead play a significant role in not only moving the story forward but in driving its salient themes of love and sacrifice for others. As Dumbledore keeps reminding Harry, it is his mother's willingness to die for him that allows him to survive and finally defeat Voldemort. Maternal power, however, is not limited to Lily Potter. The series is propelled by a number of literal and metaphorical mothers, who through the success or failure of their maternal roles determine the fate of the world created by Rowling. The series portrays the strides made by feminism,[1] especially through the contrast and similarities between Molly Weasley and Hermione Granger. Through Hermione's character, Rowling addresses much of the ambivalence many Second Wave feminists have expressed about motherhood's demands and the ways in which maternal roles have been used to keep women from focusing on their own needs.

Second Wave feminism's relationship to women's maternal duties is understandably ambivalent. While women have been historically able to exercise great power through their roles as mothers and matriarchs, their maternal obligations also fettered them to the home sphere, often preventing them from growing intellectually and professionally. Thus, the Second Wave's push for women to find fulfillment in education, the work place and sexual liberation didn't always leave room for motherhood. Most working women wanting to have a family today find that the Second Wave's conflicts have not been resolved.

Women still face the arduous task of balancing motherhood and their professional commitments. In spite of being childless in the literal sense until the epilogue, Hermione, who I will claim is a Third Wave Feminist, performs maternal functions toward Harry, while excelling in her "professional" life, that of student, rebel witch and Horcrux hunter. This essay will propose that in the books and the film adaptations, Hermione serves as both argument and inspiration for women's ability to succeed in motherhood, their careers and their relationships with friends, family and partners. I will examine how maternal power is embodied by the other characters in the story in order to show that Rowling presents a complex portrayal of the conflicts mothers

experience, thus providing a rich and detailed context for readers to understand Hermione's own maternal power.

The Right Kind of Sacrifice

Before we even meet the ten-year-old Harry, we learn of his mistreatment at the Dursleys. Although there are pictures of Dudley all over their living room, "The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too" (1997, p. 18). His Aunt Petunia is neglectful, and while most of the cruelty Harry suffers growing up is not inflicted by her, she does nothing to stop her husband from abusing her nephew. However, as Dumbledore explains to the Dursleys, Harry "'at least escaped the appalling damage you have inflicted upon the unfortunate boy sitting between you'" (2005, p. 55). As much as Harry grows up unloved, he is not spoiled and smothered as Dudley is. Petunia, the most detached from feminism of any other female characters in the series, stays home, cooks, cleans obsessively, spies on her neighbors, is terrified of losing her social status, is subservient to her husband and dotes on Dudley to the point of asphyxiation. Her maternal skills are so poor that she manages to turn the boy she hates into a decent human being and the boy she loves into a bullying, selfish coward. It is unclear how much of this is her own doing and how much comes from her unquestioning faith in her husband's judgment. Either way, through Petunia, Rowling delivers a clear warning that mothers untouched by feminism are not only hurtful to themselves—she is perpetually anxious—but to their families.

Perhaps harder to believe than the existence of giants and Polyjuice Potion is the fact that petty and unkind Petunia could have grown up in the same family as Lily. The first thing Harry hears from the world of magic comes from Hagrid, who tells him, "'Yeh look a lot like yer dad, but yeh've got yer mom's eyes'" (1997, p. 47). He will continue to hear this throughout the series. From Hagrid, Harry also learns that his parents were Head boy and Head girl at Hogwarts and very talented. They were also good providers, leaving Harry with a vault full of gold that keeps him from having to resort to the scholarship fund fellow orphan Tom Riddle uses to cover his Hogwarts expenses.

We don't know much about Lily's profession, but we don't know about James's either, so we can assume that with her talent she probably worked, or would have worked if she hadn't come of age during the most dangerous time in wizarding history. Besides being members of the Order of the Phoenix and eventually going into hiding, we don't know how Harry's parents spent their time other than doting on their son, of which we learn through Lily's letter to Sirius. Lily is "a very pretty woman" (1997, p. 208) but no one refers to her as a great beauty, as they do with Draco's mother, Narcissa, or with

Fleur. Unlike the latter two, whose main attraction lies not in the way they relate to others but in their looks, Lily has the most popular boy at school in love with her when there are, no doubt, more physically striking girls he could focus on. Hermione, who I will show is like Lily in many ways, experiences something similar when Viktor Krum starts frequenting the library for a chance to be near her. While we know Hermione from the beginning and can see why someone like Krum might find her attractive, it is not till the end of *DH* that we finally come to understand everything Lily had to offer the two brilliant wizards who loved her till the day they died.

The first time we actually meet Lily is through a memory Snape tries to keep from Harry during their Occlumency lessons. The memory is just as painful for Harry as it is for Snape but for different reasons. Up until this moment, Harry has missed his mother's love and thanked her for her sacrifice, but his fascination has been with his father, the Quidditch star and brilliant rule-breaking trickster whose best friend, Sirius Black, is one of Harry's favorite people. His connection to his father is so strong that his Patronus, unknown to him, is a stag like James's. Harry craves being told that he is like James, whom he has built up to be flawless in his mind.

Snape's memory reveals a very different father. We see a fifteen-year-old James, concerned about his appearance and with attracting attention, who attacks someone simply because Sirius is bored. His *Scourgify* jinx makes Snape gag and choke. Everyone laughs until Lily defends him by saying, "'You think you're funny.... But you're just an arrogant, bullying toerag, Potter. Leave him *alone*'" (2003, p. 647). As James's torture continues and Lily's attempts to rescue Snape intensify, Harry has two dreadful realizations. The first is that his father was a bully, something that Harry, having been bullied by Dudley, cannot quickly forgive. The second is that "his mother had been decent, yet the memory of the look on her face as she had shouted at James disturbed him quite as much as anything else" (2003, p. 653). For the first time in the series, when it comes to looking at his mother and father, Harry identifies with Lily, not James, and worries that his good mother ended up in a loveless marriage to his unkind father. It is surprising, perhaps, that it has taken him so long to see himself as being more similar to Lily than James. As Ximena Gallardo-C. and Jason Smith explain, "Appearing with a traditionally feminine narrative structure, Harry, in essence, is a boy caught in a girl's story.... Harry may be sexed male, but he is passing through a world where many females have walked before him and triumphed" (2003, p. 196). They argue that Harry's experience of childhood abuse and being constantly rewarded for his selflessness and kindness is closer to a female than a male hero journey. While I think their notions of gender may be too rigid, Gallardo-C and Smith help us see that Harry is much closer to Lily than James in how he relates to others.

Perhaps due to the mistreatment he experienced growing up with the Dursleys, Harry is aware of others' pain and never hurts someone—not even his enemy Draco—unprovoked. Unlike, his father, who according to Sirius bullied Snape in part to get Lily's attention, Harry is shy around Cho and Ginny, never flaunting his masculinity. Like Lily, who as a Mudblood has seen her share of discrimination—even from Snape—Harry cannot bear to hurt others for the fun of it because he knows exactly what it feels like to be on the receiving end of that fun. However, as I will show below, it is Hermione, another maligned Mudblood, whose compassion allows her to detect and ease the pain of other people and creatures that go unnoticed by Harry. From the little we see of Lily, we get a sense that like Hermione, she had a keen sense of compassion for others, which is why Hermione's guidance of Harry in that respect feels like a completion of what Lily would have wanted for her son. The film adaptation's choice to blur and shorten the memory of James' bullying of Snape, and to remove Lily from it, makes sense in terms of keeping things moving at a cinematic pace, but it also deprives audiences of the chance to see Harry identify with Lily, not James, a key statement made in the books.

It is Snape who, before dying, provides us with a narrative about Lily's childhood and teenage years. Through his memories we learn that Petunia's treatment of Harry was not instigated by Lily, who was loving and protective of her Muggle sister. We also see her nonjudgmental personality as she befriends the greasy-haired, poorly dressed and abused boy whom Petunia finds disgusting. In school, where she is clearly popular, Lily sticks by the very unpopular Snape, worrying about his Dark Magic proclivities and trying to stymie his hatred for Mudbloods. The whole story rests on Lily's kindness toward Snape, but we don't realize this until the final section of *DH*. Readers may wonder why if both James and Lily died trying to save Harry, it is only Lily's sacrifice that protects him. The answer lies in the fact that Snape, still in love with Lily and horrified that it was his own reporting on Trelawney's prediction that leads Voldemort to kill Harry, begs Voldemort to spare her. Voldemort in a rare display of humanity agrees to keep her alive for Snape's sake. Thus, unlike James, who is killed on the spot, Voldemort gives Lily a choice to save herself, and it is when she refuses that the protective spell of her love is cast. One could argue that most mothers would have died to protect their son, but it is Lily's loyalty and caring for an unwanted and tortured person like Snape that causes her sacrifice to work toward defeating the most dangerous wizard of all time.

While Lily's sacrifice keeps Harry alive, it is not enough to defeat Voldemort. For that, Harry must learn to follow in his mother's footsteps and sacrifice himself for the ones he loves. By allowing Voldemort to kill him, Harry awakens Lily's protection living in Voldemort's own blood since he took Harry's blood to rebuild his body. Thanks to Lily's choice, however, it is only the fragment of Voldemort's soul living inside Harry

that dies when Harry lets himself be killed, leaving Voldemort unable to hurt Harry or any of the people he sacrificed himself to protect. Hermione's role in his ability to make the right choice is almost as important as Lily's. As Dumbledore's spirit explains to Harry, it was key that he choose to destroy the Horcruxes instead of trying to make himself immortal through the Hallows, because without sacrificing himself he would have been unable to defeat Voldemort. To keep him from the Hallows temptation, Dumbledore says, "'I counted on Miss Granger to slow you up, Harry. I was afraid that your hot head might dominate your good heart'" (2007, p. 720). Hermione, as Dumbledore hoped, keeps Harry focused on destroying the Horcruxes, completing the work Lily began toward turning Harry into the sort of person who, like herself, is willing to die to protect those he loves instead of seeking immortality, as Voldemort does.

Lily and Hermione's work would have been for nothing if Harry had not received help from an unlikely ally. When Narcissa is asked to check whether Harry is dead after Voldemort attacks him, she immediately realizes he's breathing. Instead of giving him away, however, she asks whether Draco is still alive. When she learns he is, she claims that Harry has been killed. As Harry explains, "Narcissa knew that the only way she would be permitted to enter Hogwarts, and find her son, was as part of the conquering army. She no longer cared whether Voldemort won" (2007, p. 726). Narcissa's action is crucial because anyone else could have killed Harry at this point, since Lily's and his own sacrifice protect him only from Voldemort. Narcissa, as we learn in the books, is as hateful and prejudiced as her son, calling Hermione "scum" (2005, p. 114) and, no doubt, supporting her husband's efforts to bring Voldemort back. However, her love for Draco is much stronger than her politics and racism, leading her to not only lie to Voldemort but to ask Snape, against Voldemort's orders, to make the unbreakable vow to help Draco kill Dumbledore. Even in this Death Eater, maternal love is more powerful than any other allegiance.

As Dumbledore would no doubt remind us, it is Voldemort's misunderstanding of maternal love that leads him to trust Narcissa with the task of checking Harry. His ignorance stems from having never met Merope, his own mother, who after years of abuse by her father and brother fell in love with Tom Riddle, a handsome Muggle neighbor. Dumbledore conjectures that she used love potions to keep him by her side, but once she was pregnant she mistakenly thought he'd grown to love her, so she stopped using them. Abandoned by Riddle, she refused to use magic and made no effort to stay alive to care for her son. When Harry questions her behavior, Dumbledore tells him, "do not judge her too harshly, Harry. She was greatly weakened by long suffering and she never had your mother's courage" (2005, p. 262,). While Dumbledore is able to forgive her, Voldemort interprets her death as weakness and abandonment. Being his only magical parent, she bequeaths him the gift of magic, and a very powerful magic at

that, but she does not accompany that gift with love and caring—not that she had known any herself—thus creating a monster. Like Petunia, Merope in her utter weakness and helpless suffering at the hands of men, is far removed from feminism. However, while Petunia's behavior seems to be a choice—after all, her sister Lily fits many feminist ideals—Merope never had a chance. It is accidental poor mothering, then, that seems to be the source of the worse evil in the series.

Merope's story has been omitted from the films, weakening Rowling's emphasis on maternal abandonment as an insurmountable problem. It is hard to say whether Merope, as well as Lily's defense of Snape, have been left out in order to keep the films going at an entertaining cinematic pace, or if it the significance of such moments was simply missed by the male screenwriters and director. Perhaps adding a female screenwriter to the team may have resulted in these sections being included, though of course, we cannot assume that because a writer is female, she will be attuned to issues of gender and maternal power. Still, for a series that was written by a woman and that deals with female and feminist issues throughout, having at least some female screenwriters and directors might have resulted in films that more strongly reflect the gender issues presented in the books.

Metaphorical Mothers

While Dumbledore acts as a father/grandfather for Harry, his fellow Hogwarts professor Minerva McGonagall provides what none of his other mother replacements do: discipline and rigidity. When Harry meets her, we learn that "[s]he had a very stern face and Harry's first thought was that this was not someone to cross" (1997, p. 113). His first impression is indeed right. Minerva has no problem putting him in detention when she thinks he deserves it, and unlike other teachers like Dumbledore, Lupin and Slughorn, she does not overlook his faults or infractions out of fondness or to protect him. The only exceptions concern Quidditch, of which she's as an avid fan, and she's willing to slightly bend the rules for her Seeker. Minerva's stern treatment of Harry does not come from unkindness or lack of love—she cares so much about him that she spends a whole day spying on the Dursleys before Harry is brought to them as a baby. She treats Harry with discipline because she believes that's the best she can do for him. This particular incarnation of the mother in Rowling's universe believes in letting children learn from their own mistakes and making sure it's clear to them that she will not get them out of the messes they get themselves into. This approach takes perhaps more courage than the others since it makes women who are devoted to children, as Minerva is to Harry and his fellow Gryffindors, less popular with them than more forgiving, affectionate mother figures.

Molly Weasley is as rigid with her children as Minerva is with Harry, although she doesn't discipline Harry in the same way, in spite of thinking of him as a son. She takes care of him from the moment she sees him struggling to get into platform 9 ¾ and helps him figure out how to do it. She then protects him when Fred wants to ask him what Voldemort looks like, telling her son, "'I forbid you to ask him, Fred. No, don't you dare. As though he needs reminding of that on his first day at school'" (1997, p. 97). She seals his welcome into the family by making him Weasley sweaters every Christmas —a privilege neither Hermione nor Bill's fiancée Fleur enjoy—and she gives him her brother Fabian's gold watch for his seventeenth birthday, a gift parents usually provide on that occasion (2007, p. 114). During her argument with Sirius about how much Harry should be told about the Order of the Phoenix, Sirius tells her that Harry is not her son, to which she replies, "'He's as good as.... Who else has he got?'" (2003, p. 90). Harry has a number of potential mothers, as I have shown and will continue to show, but Molly is the only one to actually claim him as a son. Moreover, being accepted by Molly means being part of her talented and loving family, thus fulfilling Harry's dearest wish: to have a family.

One could perhaps make an argument for Molly being quite removed from feminism. She is, after all, a housewife whose life revolves around her children and husband, and who, although a member of the Order of the Phoenix, seems to mostly cook and clean for them, a glorified maid of sorts. Following the above description, we could picture Molly as what Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards call Martyr Moms, who "are passive-aggressive, making dinner for eight when they're exhausted, and then hating you later for it, essentially ceding their own lives in the thankless service of others [since our] patriarchal society expects mothers to be totally giving and available, downplaying their own needs, ambitions, and desires" (2000, p. 211). Martyr Moms existed before the Second Wave of feminism, but after the 60s and 70s, when female liberation discourses became more widespread, the problem intensified. Knowing there is a different way of living as a woman but being unable to attain it cannot be easy for overworked mothers who feel their labor is not appreciated. Rowling could have easily turned Molly into a Martyr Mom, but instead she crafted her as someone who finds great empowerment and joy in her maternal role, not only toward her own children and Harry, but toward fellow members of the Order like Tonks and Lupin. Rowling is making an argument for women like Molly, who happily and skillfully perform the role of housewife and mother, to also be viable representations of feminism.

Molly is an accomplished cook and healer and manages to keep a house that, while not obsessively clean like Petunia's, is always pleasantly livable. Although she has seven children—eight if you count Harry—she seems to find time to focus on all of them, often to their annoyance, as her arguments with Bill about his earring and long hair show. She also worries about Harry's appearance, not only laundering his clothes but "attacking

his hair with a wet comb" before he attends his hearing at the Ministry (2003, p. 157). Like Bill, Harry finds this gesture slightly irksome, since in *OotP* he is barely managing to keep his adolescent rage under control. However, much like the Weasley children, he knows it comes out of love, and he doesn't outwardly fight it.

While Molly takes care of her children's physical needs, she also exercises all discipline at home. After Ron and the twins steal Arthur's car to rescue Harry from the Dursleys, they are terrified of her wrath upon their return. "All three of Mrs. Weasley's sons were taller than she was, but they cowered as her rage broke over them" (1999, p. 33). Even Mr. Weasley fears her, threatening the twins to tell their mother about how they tested one of their products on Dudley but backpedaling when she questions him about the incident. Gallardo C. and Smith argue that Molly's role as the disciplinarian is problematic because it reinforces "the image of women as the civilizers of men" (2003, p. 193). However, Molly is just as strict with Ginny, so she is in fact the "civilizer" of children. I would argue that her role as a disciplinarian can be seen as one of strength. She is undermining the traditional view of fathers being the ones who children fear and who exercise control over their behavior.

Molly is not perfect, however. As Gallardo C. and Smith note, "both Hermione and Mrs. Weasley fall head over heels for the vain and fraudulent Gilderoy Lockhart" (2003, p. 194). In the twelve-year-old Hermione it's understandable, but in Molly it shows a marked lack of instinct, since it takes Harry one brief meeting to know Lockhart can't be trusted. Molly also believes Rita Skeeter's lies about Harry and Hermione's broken love affair, showing a lack of sophistication when it comes to navigating the press. Perhaps Molly's most unfair and arguably immature behavior is toward Fleur, who although slightly arrogant and not always pleasant, is very much in love with Bill. Molly goes as far as to not make her a Weasley sweater when everyone else gets one that Christmas. However, we learn that her decision to exclude Fleur comes from fear that Fleur doesn't love Bill enough. After Bill is attacked by Greyback, Fleur shows Molly how wrong she is by saying, "What do I care how he looks? I am good-looking enough for both of us, I theenk! All these scars show is zat my husband is brave!" (2005, p. 623). Having proven her love, Fleur is accepted with open arms by Molly, who proceeds to host their wedding with great zeal.

While some readers may find Molly's foibles problematic, especially since the former two make her seem less intelligent than other characters, I would argue that her positive qualities far outweigh the negative ones. Moreover, from a feminist perspective, showing readers that a mother need not be a perfect human being is a valuable statement. Much of motherhood's power historically came from the assumption that mothers were selfless beings dedicated to their children and husbands' happiness, often ignoring their own needs. While we have been made to believe that such a mother is a

morally superior being who deserves admiration, it is also a near impossible and not very enjoyable way to live, and one of the reasons why Second Wave feminists questioned motherhood so strongly. Although Molly represents many of the pre-feminism characteristics of motherhood, she is also imperfect and a little foolish at times, reminding readers that one need not be blameless to succeed as a mother.

Molly's love for her family comes at a steep price. When having to defeat the boggart at Grimmauld place, she cries as she watches it turn into the cadaver of every one of her children, including Harry. While his siblings and father are furious at Percy's betrayal of the family, Molly is wounded by it. As Ron explains, "'She came up to London to try and talk to Percy but he slammed the door in her face'" (2003, p. 72). She persists even though he sends back his Christmas sweater and pretends to visit them only so Scrimgeour can speak to Harry (2005, p. 341). Knowing that their mother cannot help but forgive such grave offenses solidifies for her children the extent to which her anger and strictness comes from her desire to see them well and happy. Even the twins, who are the recipients of her most enraged lectures, become a source of pride once they show that they'll be able to take care of themselves. Having never had a single luxury throughout the story, she gladly wears their expensive Christmas gifts and shows pride in their business acumen. The fact that the twins manage to appreciate her serves as an argument that for non–Martyr Moms there is the reward of having one's grown children be thankful for their upbringing.

The twins' celebration of their mother is particularly important because Fred dies at the end of *DH*, so that getting some closure for their past conflicts is important. After mourning her son, Molly, who has stayed behind not only for every mission of the Order but even for the Quidditch World Cup, finally displays her ability to fight during the final battle at Hogwarts. She finds Bellatrix dueling with Ginny, Luna and Hermione, and when she sees Bellatrix barely miss the Killing Curse she sends to Ginny, she screams, "NOT MY DAUGHTER, YOU BITCH!" (2007, p. 737). After Bellatrix mocks, "What will happen to your children when I've killed you? ... When Mummy's gone the same way as Freddie?" Molly kills her (2007, p. 737). Second only to Voldemort in enjoyment of evil, Bellatrix has been the second most dreaded villain in the story. A woman with no maternal inclinations who is able to mock another whose child has just been murdered, Bellatrix is as ignorant of the power of maternal love as her master. By killing her, Molly proves that her absence from the Order's missions was not due to her lack of fighting ability. Being a housewife and a doting mother does not preclude a woman from being fierce when such behavior is needed. Voldemort and Bellatrix, the two deadliest villains in the story, are defeated by mothers fighting to protect their children and, in Harry's case, by those children honoring and continuing the maternal sacrifice.

Living in Third Wave Feminism

While Molly thrives in the home sphere, her younger counterpart Hermione would most likely find such a life dull and repressive. It is not that Hermione has no maternal inclinations. She is as dedicated to mothering others as Molly, but she is also deeply tied to her professional aspirations. Like others born after the 70s in the West, she "never knew a time before 'girls can do anything boys can!'" (Baumgardner and Richards, 2000, p. 16). Third Wave feminists, and I argue that Hermione fits under that label, benefit from the labor of Second Wave feminists, often taking equality with men and the right to aspire to professional and emotionally fulfilling lives for granted. Perhaps because these rights—if certainly not the realities—seem self-evident, the fact that mere decades ago they were unheard of escapes many young women today, including those who identify themselves as feminists.

As Baumgardner and Richards explain, this ignorance of how much we owe to the feminists who came before us comes in part because, as with the First Wave, we have little knowledge of our feminist predecessors' history. Moreover, for the Third Wave they argue that "while on a personal level feminism is everywhere, like fluoride, on a political level the movement is more like nitrogen: ubiquitous and inert" (2000, p. 13). The main criticism of Third Wave feminists is that while they may live feminist lives, thriving professionally, demanding equal treatment on a personal level and taking charge of their sexuality, feminism as a movement seems dormant when compared to the Second Wave's more organized and visible struggle. However, as Baumgardner and Richards explain, the goals of feminism have remained constant for centuries: "legal, political, and social equality" for everyone (2000, p. 20). Moreover, in order to attain those goals, Baumgardner and Richards remind us that Third Wave feminists across the world are in fact working in ways that resemble the Second Wave's marches, feminist schools and attempts to pass legislation. These efforts are more scattered but they still take place.

As an example of Third Wave feminism, Hermione attempts to start a political movement to protect house elves, confronts Harry and Ron's sexism, is sexually liberated and excels academically, ensuring a bright professional future. However, the Hermione we meet on the first Hogwarts Express has a long way to go to become the strong and compassionate young woman we come to identify with her character. Harry's first impression of Hermione is that she has "a bossy sort of voice" (1997, p. 105). She confirms his idea by telling him and Ron to change into their robes. She is also arrogant. Not only mocking Ron's spell to turn Scabbers yellow but chastising Harry for not having read the books that talk about him. She continually lectures them over breaking

the rules, “Don’t you *care* about Gryffindor, do you *only* care about yourselves, *I* don’t want Slytherin to win the house cup, and you’ll lose all the points I got from Professor McGonagall for knowing about Switching Spells” (1997, p. 155). Because the series is mostly in third person limited, we only notice what Harry notices, and since Hermione is merely annoying to him at this point, we don’t realize how much she is probably suffering. Much like Lily, Hermione is a bright Mudblood calling attention to herself through her academics in a fairly racist school, but unlike Lily, who had Snape to comfort and guide her through her introduction to magic, Hermione is alone. Her obnoxious bragging is most likely her misguided attempt to prove herself, but Harry, who has much more worrisome things to consider, does not give her motivations much thought.

It takes Harry and Ron saving Hermione from the troll for them to accept her, and once they do, she immediately changes. Unlike Harry and Ron, whose major personality developments take the whole series to unravel, Hermione is fairly unchanged from the troll attack onward. Her most obvious characteristic is her brilliance. When Lupin tells her, “‘You’re the cleverest witch of your age I’ve ever met, Hermione’” (1999, p. 346), he is voicing what all the teachers and students know. Not only is she good with remembering book knowledge, she is also gifted with potions, spells and charms, as when she successfully performs Memory Charms on Dolohov and Rowle although she only knows the theory behind them (2007, p. 166). Even though she’s hopeless at Quidditch and doesn’t like riding brooms, she’s not physically weak, withstanding Bellatrix’s torture so well that she’s able to invent a lie about the sword of Gryffindor in the middle of her pain. The films intensify Hermione’s physical power. While in the books she slaps Malfoy in order to defend Hagrid, she punches him in the adaptation, a strong, cathartic punch that we get to watch twice from different angles since we revisit it with the Time-Turner. Beginning with Alfonso Cuarón’s *PoA* (2004), the films’ Hermione is as agile and strong as Ron and Harry, often running faster than they do and taking physical distress in stride in ways that she doesn’t seem to in the books.

The books and adaptations do agree on Hermione’s toughness and resilience in one area: emotionally. While both Harry and Ron break down, attack each other and lose hope during the Horcrux search, Hermione remains focused and committed to the task, even when she’s brokenhearted over Ron’s abandonment. In the film adaptation, we hear Hermione pitifully calling after Ron when he leaves. The scene is more painful than Harry’s description of it in the book because we can hear the distress in her voice. The films make Hermione even more important than she is in the books because they are not as limited to Harry’s perception. Although much of the adaptations is still tied to Harry’s point of view, we see Emma Watson’s portrayal on the screen and are able to attach ourselves to her individually in ways that we can’t when we’re seeing her only through Harry’s eyes and words.

Although Hermione is more physically agile in the films, her undeniably feminist moments appear only in the books. Whenever Harry and Ron assume someone is male, as in the case of the Half-Blood Prince and R.A.B., she reminds them that the person could also be female. She chastises Ron for saying that he and Harry "don't want to end up with a pair of trolls" at the ball (2000, p. 394), showing him how shallow his idea sounds. It turns out she's right because, although very pretty, his partner Padma Patil has nothing in common with him and he can't even be bothered to ask her to dance. Hermione explains that her smooth hair from the dance is due to her applying Sleekeazy's Hair Potion, "'but it's way too much bother to do everyday'" (2000, p. 433). Although there's been a backlash against Second Wave feminists' condemnation of makeup and other beauty rituals, many Third Wave feminists still feel, much like Hermione, that spending too much time on their appearance keeps them from other more engaging or nourishing pursuits.

Besides her bushy hair, we're told by Harry that Hermione has "rather large front teeth" (1997, p. 105). Pansy Parkinson puts it more bluntly when she compares her to a chipmunk (2000, p. 316). It is not until Malfoy hexes her by enlarging her teeth even more that Hermione solves the problem by letting Madame Pomfrey shrink them further than they naturally go. She explains that she'd been asking her dentist parents to let her shrink them magically for years but they wanted her to continue wearing braces instead (2000, p. 405). Placing her parents' wishes before her looks, she withstands four years of teasing over her teeth when she could have fixed them from the beginning, again showing that she values other things, like her relationships, above beauty. She does finally give in, but since changing her teeth would be considered normal in the magical world, it's not as big a step as it may seem to Muggles like her parents.

The film adaptations do not comply with the books' description of Hermione's hair and teeth. Instead they cast Watson, whose unremarkable teeth give her a traditionally attractive smile, and whose shiny, multihued hair is so iconic that the first thing she did when she finished the series was cut it, explaining that her new hairstyle allowed her to finally have her own identity (Fulton, 2011). Film being a visual medium and Hermione being the closest we have to a female protagonist, it would have been revolutionary if Chris Columbus and his team had cast a girl who was anything but traditionally beautiful to play the part. Although beauty is indeed subjective, the film industry has certain parameters for who they will present as beautiful on screen and big-budget, mainstream films rarely deviate from them. While Rowling's message that bushy-haired and big-toothed girls can be just as central and heroic is lost in the films, Watson's looks have contributed to her becoming a powerful screen presence. By casting someone who is visually appealing in a traditional Hollywood way, the films have turned her into an even more compelling character for many audience members who expect leading actors to be good looking. Moreover, they have kept her beauty

desexualized, usually dressing her in jeans, shirts and hoodies that match the spirit of Hermione in the books.

In her study of women's relationships to celebrities, Jackie Stacey found that they are seen "as out of reach, and belonging to a different world plane of existence" (1999, p. 199). And yet, in spite of the great barrier women perceive between them and the celebrities they admire, there is a desire to cross over and experience life through a celebrity's perspective, so that "the difference between the female star and the female spectator is a source of fascination not only with ideals of physical beauty, but also with the stars' personalities and behavior" (1999, p. 201). It isn't just what female celebrities wear but also what they do and how they behave that is alluring to their fans. Moreover, when dealing with young fans and young celebrities, differentiating the actor from the character they play becomes exceedingly difficult. With child actors working for the first time, like the Harry Potter trio, audiences have no other characters to compare them to, so that particular role becomes their identity. This is not so much of an issue with shorter projects, since the actor then moves on to other roles and changes audience perspectives. However, besides lending her voice to the animated film *The Tale of Despereaux* and costarring in the made-for-TV movie *Ballet Shoes*, Watson has remained committed to the series exclusively, cementing the notion that she is indeed like Hermione.

Young audiences in particular fall in love with film characters and would like to believe that they exist somewhere. And who better to embody them than the people who bring them to life on the screen? To increase similarities, Watson's life, as far as the media has portrayed it, is not so different from Hermione's. As Watson herself explains, "'I probably started out more like [Hermione] and got less like her. I'm very heady and intellectual and we're very similar in that way—we're very eager to please and need approval'" (Fulton, 2011). Not only has she managed to survive a nearly scandal-free adolescence under the famously ravenous British paparazzi regime, the fact that she attends Brown University helps support her statement that, like Hermione, she has a good mind for academics. She has also proven her political conscience through her work as creative advisor with Tree People, a clothing company using organic cotton and Fair Trade to better the lives of workers in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (Olins, 2011). Having contacted Tree People herself, Watson worked on the collection and arranged the photo shoot for the collection's advertising, getting her friends to be both models and crew members for no remuneration (Carroll, 2010). The clothes look comfortable and not overly sexual, similar to the outfits Hermione wears in the film adaptations. Moreover, Watson's choice to provide an alternative to purchasing clothes made in sweatshops or by underpaid workers resembles Hermione's efforts to free house elves in the series. Even though Columbus and his team could not have foreseen it when they cast the nine-year-old Watson, the fact that she seems to so closely resemble

Hermione in her life choices has increased her character's influence with audiences, adding weight to Hermione's feminist message.

Part of Hermione's value to young readers comes from the fact that much like Molly, she is imperfect. It is important for Hermione to be flawed in some ways because she is the character many of the female—and some of the male—audience aspire to be, and it would be unhealthy and unrealistic for her to be perfect. She is often unnecessarily neurotic about schoolwork, showing a lack of self-confidence and annoying her friends and perhaps her readers with her nervousness. Most of her immature moments relate to her unfulfilled relationship with Ron, however. Even though she is usually secure about her looks, she becomes jealous of Ron's infatuations with Fleur and Madam Rosmerta. Understandably she is brokenhearted when Ron starts going out with Lavender, but her retaliation, to invite Cormac McLaggen to Slughorn's Christmas party, backfires since he "makes Grawp look a gentleman" (2000, p. 317). She thus suffers herself in her attempt to hurt Ron.

The film adaptations, especially *PoA* (Columbus, 2004), increase the sexual tension and downplay the arguing between Hermione and Ron. While she can hold hands with Harry naturally during their Time Turner adventure, when she holds hands with Ron, it's always awkward and they quickly let go. By focusing on their sexual awakening and not their arguments, Cuarón manages a similar effect to the books and does it successfully, since these sorts of gestures are very effective on film, especially when we don't need to see them through Harry's perspective and can experience them directly. Even though Hermione's immaturity arises through her relationship with Ron, she doesn't spend the series pining for him. As a matter of fact, Ron starts his relationship with Lavender to punish Hermione for her physical involvement with Viktor. She not only dates Viktor while he's at Hogwarts, but continues corresponding with him throughout the series in spite of Ron's loud objections to their friendship. Even though she loves Ron, she will not let him control her relationships.

Perhaps Hermione's strongest feminist characteristic is her willingness to break the rules in order to fight for equality and the wellbeing of others. Although she is usually a stickler for the rules, she has no problem rebelling if she thinks the cause is worthy. When Harry and Ron are unsure about making the Polyjuice Potion in order to spy on Malfoy, she tells them, "*I* don't want to break rules, you know. *I* think threatening Muggle-borns is far worse than brewing up a difficult potion" (1999, p. 165). She even steals from Dumbledore days after his death, using a Summoning Charm to retrieve the Horcrux books he removed from the library. Although she feels guilty about her actions, she realizes that without them, innocent people and creatures will suffer. Thus, like thousands of feminists before her, she transcends the rules in order to create a more just world.

Becoming Lily

Hermione's involvement with political struggles and with freeing the wizarding world from Voldemort springs from her keen ability to, like Lily, sense the suffering of others. From the first book we see her protect Neville. When he arrives at Gryffindor with a Leg-Locker Curse, "Everyone fell over laughing except Hermione, who leapt up and performed the countercurse" (1997, p. 217). She is the only one to stand up to the twins when they start testing their products on first-year students, threatening in her knowledge of maternal power to let Molly know what they're doing. Her compassion is not limited to humans but also to other creatures. She protects Lupin, hiding the fact that he's a werewolf, questions anti-giant prejudice, and when Ron doubts the Goblin version of Godric Gryffindor's behavior, reminds him that "[w]izarding history often skates over what the wizards have done to other magical races" (2007, p. 506). Her biggest foray in helping others, however, is her attempt to fight for elf rights, which is not featured in the films.

As Brycchan Carey explains, "Unlike Harry, whose response to the problem was largely personal, Hermione sees the problem as a public one, requiring political engagement to reach public solutions. Moreover, her description of the magical world is accurate. The house-elves are indeed in slavery" (2003, p. 105). Harry frees Dobby because he likes him and does not want him to suffer under the Malfoys. He is unable to take Dobby's experience, however, and see how other elves may be experiencing a similar fate. It takes Hermione's keen eye for suffering and politics to understand that things need to change. While her awareness is admirable, her campaign through S.P.E.W. (Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare) is one of Hermione's only failures in the series. Not only is she unable to recruit any willing members for the Society, her attempts to make elves see that they have "'the right to wages and holidays and proper clothes'" (2000, P. 538) only terrify them. It seems so obvious to her that they are being enslaved that she is unable to put herself in their shoes and see how threatening her ideas must seem to them. Moreover, her borderline immoral attempts to free them against their will by leaving concealed clothes for them in Gryffindor insult their intelligence and end up causing Dobby to overwork himself, since no other elves will clean Gryffindor.

In her feminist blog *Deeply Problematic*, Rachel McCarthy James argues that with S.P.E.W., Hermione "participates in the grand feminist tradition of devaluing, disregarding and silencing oppressed classes while centering herself and her opinions on their marginalization" (James, 2001). Though James does not say whether she thinks Rowling did this as a criticism of the feminist movement or by accident, James argues

that Hermione's actions make her character reprehensible. James's critique of feminism has been voiced by scholars like bell hooks, Lynet Uttal and Cherríe Moraga, who find the primarily white, straight and financially privileged Second Wave feminist movement to both silence and misrepresent women of color, lesbians, working-class women, etc. While that was, and in many cases still is, a valid criticism of feminism, I would argue that it is unfair to direct it at Hermione.

James makes the very good point that S.P.E.W. "is rotten at its core because it is led by a witch rather than an elf" (James, 2011). It would have, of course, been much better for Hermione to have a supporting role, but being a fifteen-year-old faced with a terrible situation, she rashly chooses to act right away. There being no elf rights movement at that point, she tries to start one. Her main error comes in trying to convince other wizards to join her before she tries to talk to the elves themselves to see if there's interest in her revolution. James attributes her choice to the fact that "Hermione considers elves lesser creatures who need protection" (James, 2011). However, I would argue it's rather a matter of access—since elves are practically invisible at Hogwarts. When she finally gets to speak to the elves, however, she realizes that the problem is much greater than she thought, since they don't want to be freed. Her inability to communicate her emancipatory ideas to the elves leads to her terribly misguided attempts to free them against their will—Hermione's worst actions in the whole series. James believes that Hermione behaves this way because she is upset that elves do not "regard her as their glorious liberator witch, better than all the other witches" (James, 2011). However, this goes against her personality throughout the series. While Ron is often jealous of Harry's celebrity and its perks, Hermione isn't. She is more instrumental than Ron in Harry's success but feels no need to flaunt her participation. It makes no sense, then, for her to then seek glory through her work with the elves. I would argue that Hermione's efforts are not "malicious" as James claims, but rather those of a burgeoning, overenthusiastic feminist with no knowledge of how to start a political movement.

In the end, Hermione becomes distracted by Voldemort and his Death Eaters and lets go of her campaign. Her only real contribution to elf welfare turns out to be as personal as Harry's, when she convinces him to treat Kreacher kindly, thus bringing out a completely different elf in him. It is perhaps appropriate that Hermione's only success in elf rights should be through Harry, since one of her main roles in the novel is to fill some of the void left by Lily. While Molly provides the physical aspects of motherhood, feeding him and looking after his possessions, as well as protective love and concern for his safety, Hermione guides him through adolescence, helping him mature emotionally and become the student, wizard and human being he needs to be in order to defeat Voldemort. Gallardo-C and Smith argue that "[e]ven Harry's friend Hermione, like Professor Minerva McGonagall, eventually becomes a mother figure for Ron and

Harry. Clearly the text implies that the primary role of women in society is the care, socialization, and education of men *at any cost*" (2003, p. 193). However, although Hermione does adopt a maternal role toward Harry, she doesn't seem to give up anything in order to do so. Her major sacrifices such as quitting school and erasing herself from her parents' memories are not about taking care of Harry but about destroying Voldemort, which is not a matter of looking after him, but of saving the wizarding world—herself included—from a terrible fate.

Many of Hermione's actions toward Harry are close to what Lily presumably would have done in helping her son succeed in life. Hermione checks Ron and Harry's homework but she "would never let them copy" arguing that otherwise they will not learn (1997, p. 182). Being more advanced in magic than Harry, as Lily would have been, she teaches him to become a better wizard such as when she helps him learn the Summoning Charm for the Triwizard Tournament. She also saves him as Lily did, getting him out of Bathilda's house alive and jinxing his face so the snatchers won't recognize him when they capture him. Once they are searching for the Horcruxes, she becomes his conscience as Dumbledore had hoped she would, reminding him to close down his mind from Voldemort and focus on the task at hand, to the point that he starts hiding his visions from her. Although Hermione is only months older than he is, her maturity level helps her become the person whose lectures Harry fears as he would Lily's. Like the Weasleys with Molly, he doesn't want to disappoint her because he knows her criticisms stem from love and the correct sense of what he needs to do.

In spite of her brilliance, Hermione's most important mothering support is not intellectual but emotional. Observant and intuitive like an effective mother, she knows the secrets Harry is trying to hide, like his crushes on both Cho and Ginny, using this knowledge to gently help Harry learn to navigate the female psyche. After she explains the many conflicting emotions Cho must be feeling about being with Harry, Ron tells her, "One person can't feel all that at once, they'd explode" (2003, p. 459), voicing Harry's own confusion, and why her guidance, which Lily would have provided, is so vital to him. Because she knows Harry so well, Hermione is able to provide him with the advice and support he needs to hear at particularly trying times. When he must go after the Sorcerer's Stone alone, she tells him what a great wizard he is. To his reply that he's not as good as she is, she responds, "'Books! And cleverness! There are more important things—friendship and bravery'" (1997, p. 287), emphasizing that he possesses the very qualities he later uses to defeat Quirrell and Voldemort.

She again praises his abilities when asking him to become their Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. After he complains that she has done better on every test, she tells him that he beat her during their third year, "'the only year we both sat the test and had a teacher who actually knew the subject. But I'm not talking about test results, Harry.

Look what you've *done*!'" (2003, p. 326). For someone who is so concerned about her grades, Hermione is well aware of the value of actions outside the classroom, and in those, she reminds Harry, he excels. By downplaying the value of academic achievement in order to make Harry feel better about himself, she may be selling herself short, something that mothers at times do in order to make their children feel accomplished when they doubt themselves. By the end of the series, however, Hermione has shown herself to be as gifted as Harry at surviving danger outside the classroom, making her comments on the value of "doing" applicable to herself as well. Like maternal figures in the real world, she has grown through her mothering in ways that go beyond taking care of others to transforming herself into a more powerful and competent person all around.

Knowing about Harry's need for parental replacements, she keeps reassuring him that Dumbledore loved him whenever Harry begins to doubt his mentor's motivations after Rita Skeeter's book tarnishes his reputation. Her emotional support of Harry, however, does not only come in the form of praise or loving words. She also, as effective mothers must often do, tells him the truths he doesn't want to hear. When Harry's adolescent anger keeps raging in *OotP*, she says, "it would be quite nice if you stopped jumping down Ron's and my throats, Harry, because if you haven't noticed, we're on your side" (2003, p. 223). She also explains, very gently, that Harry has a "*saving-people-thing*" (2003, p. 733), which Voldemort may be using to lure him into a trap by pretending to have Sirius. Although her comment greatly upsets him, after Sirius dies he wishes he had "opened his mind to the possibility that Voldemort was, as Hermione had said, banking on Harry's *love of playing the hero*" (2003, p. 820). As children ideally do with their parents, Harry begins to realize that Hermione has been right about most of the things she has advised him throughout the years, allowing Rowling to instill in young readers the importance of valuing their own parental figures.

Hermione's maternal role is trickier in the films because while we can choose to imagine a seemingly older Hermione in the books, in the movies we see that she is clearly Harry's age. Watson's performance, both mature and caring, however, captures Hermione's spirit in spite of the actors' youth. *DH Part 1* especially plays with the maternal angle of their relationship, showing Hermione cutting Harry's hair and later tenderly messing with it, telling him, "Don't ever let me give you a haircut again" (Barron, 2010). While Molly can no doubt cut hair well, Hermione's ease with mothering stops at the emotional and intellectual level. It is also in *DH Part 1* that we see Harry try to return Hermione's caring in a scene that is not in the book. When a romantic song appears on the radio, he takes the Horcrux off her, throws it on the bed and begins to dance with her. It's funny, bad dancing on his part. He's clearly clowning around to cheer her up after Ron has left. She laughs and holds on to him with no hint of sexual tension. She becomes distressed again at the end of the song, however, and he

looks at her sadly, knowing that his distraction was only momentary. Harry has understood how much Hermione has done for him and wants to do something for her in return, but like most children, he learns that there are some sorrows parental figures experience that children have no control over; just like, at some point, parents stop being able to soothe their children's pain. In that goofy, dancing moment, Harry seems to grow up.

Although Harry Potter is a series told through the eyes of its male protagonist, feminist ideas and an exploration and celebration of motherhood's complexities and triumphs pervade the books and their film adaptations. Harry must not only understand his mother's sacrifice, he must also decide to repeat it in order to defeat Voldemort, whose ignorance of maternal love starts with his own mother's death at his birth. Even though much of Harry's journey to his own sacrifice comes from making sense of his mother's life and motivations, he is aided by other maternal figures. Both Molly and Hermione come together to fill different areas of the void left by Lily in Harry's life, providing him with the support he needs to grow up into the man who will defeat Voldemort. Although much of the story does deal with women helping Harry and other children grow up, which could be considered antifeminist by having women spend much effort taking care of others and not themselves, Rowling manages to weave strong feminist ideals into her tale. In spite of being a housewife, Molly is a fierce disciplinarian and warrior while also having nourishing, doting qualities without visible conflict. Hermione, on her part, manages to balance what many of her fellow Third Wave feminists struggle with: professional and personal fulfillment as well as mothering others. Through Hermione, Rowling makes an argument to her young readers and the films' audiences that women can indeed have it all if they make the right choices as Hermione does.

Notes

1. Even though I realize that there is no such thing as feminism per se but rather a multiplicity of feminisms, I will refer to the word in the singular for the sake of readability and to avoid confusion. I will also make distinctions between Second and Third Wave feminism. Although some of the characteristics I claim belong to these waves do not represent every member or strand of that particular feminist era, they are agreed upon generalizations that I need to use in order to make a cohesive argument.

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Alohomora!

Unlocking Hermione's Feminism

SARAH MARGARET KNIESLER

> *"Young women, I would say, and please attend, for the peroration is beginning, you are, in my opinion, disgracefully ignorant. You have never made a discovery of any sort of importance. You have never shaken an empire or led an army into battle. [...] What is your excuse?"*—Woolf 1929, 146–7.

> *"But Ron was staring at Hermione as though suddenly seeing her in a whole new light. 'Hermione, Neville's right—you are a girl....'"*—Rowling 2000, 400.

Recognition of the history of women's writing—their authorship, their role in fiction, and their presence in the literary canon—has been severely lacking over the last century. Despite the fact that Virginia Woolf published her extended essay *A Room of One's Own* in 1929, prominently upheld scholarly traditions continue to be dictated by patriarchal values and norms. The continued relegation of women to a secondary status within the literary sphere is the result of a cyclical pattern of exclusion; the appreciation of male-authored literature and male characters over female-authored literature and female characters at an advanced level is simultaneously reinforcing and being bolstered by the assumptions made about literature for children and young adults.

When searching for a suitable read for an adolescent, consumers are often found asking for a "boy book" or a "girl book." In her article entitled "Guys Read Guy Books," Mary Jacobs (2008) reduces boys' reading habits to sweeping generalizations, expounding upon a popular supposition held by today's society: "Boys read less fiction than girls but tend to enjoy escapism and humor. Many boys are passionate about science fiction and fantasy. They like to read stories about their interests such as those related to hobbies or sports" (Jacobs n.pag.). As opposed to catering to the interests of the child, the widespread belief is that each sex shares common reading interests, thus books are often chosen based on the young reader's sex. More importantly, Jacobs addresses the over-circulated idea that boys are only interested in male protagonists whereas girls are more likely to engage with texts featuring protagonists of either sex (Jacobs n.pag.).

With these troublesome assumptions—reminiscent of the problematic universal "he" pronoun—in mind, the levels of success reached by J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series are understandable; her protagonist is a male, therefore he and his stories are widely accessible to boys and girls alike.

However, Harry is not alone in his adventures. Although the books follow his life and are told from his perspective, the series does not present itself as the chronicle of an individual's journey so much as that of a triumvirate: Harry, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Hermione's presence in and impact on the group is indicative of the feminist movement's progress; this mixed-sex trio, who each contribute their individual talents and interests to the escapades, are intrinsically different than the same-sex detective teams found in popular series like the *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* that catered to boys and girls, respectively, over seventy-five years ago. It is no coincidence that Hermione's character has been widely accepted in tandem with yet another shift in feminism.

Since Woolf's era, the underlying thematic nexus of the feminist movement has remained equality of the sexes. Overtime, however, the unifying goals of the movement have expanded in scope as each new frontier for women was settled. In *Females and Harry Potter*, Ruthann Mayes-Elma (2006) utilizes the work of feminist bell hooks in order to describe the progression of the feminist movement: the first wave established the idea that feminism is a concept driven by irritated women in an effort to be more like men; the second wave was an angry reaction to patriarchal authority by women with significant anti-male attitudes; the third wave is comprised of entirely different issues (hooks, 2000b) (Mayes-Elma 32). Whereas Woolf's focal concern was that women take advantage of the education and employment opportunities available to them, later generations of feminists did not see these aims as satisfactory.

The extent to which women participated in education and the workforce experienced a metamorphosis over the decades. Once the hurdle of convincing women to physically pass over the threshold of the domestic was cleared, feminists began to expect more than female participation in universities, factories, and offices. Women started demanding additional acknowledgement of their presence—they sought recognition of their value as well as access to development and promotion (Simone de Beauvoir 1949/2009). As generations of feminists established themselves outside of the home, focus returned to reimagining personal relationships (Betty Friedan 1963/2001). The movement began to resist the anti-men mentality and instead focused on women and men finding mutual respect for one another. Natasha Walters (2006) explores recent manifestations of feminism in her book *The New Feminism*. Of the late twentieth-century movement, she writes, "Feminism is simply an argument for sexual equality, and that equality is now desired by most men as well as almost all women" (Walters 149).

Modern-day feminism promotes the theory that only the universal recognition of the prejudices faced by both women and men can perpetuate the equality of the sexes.

The feminist movement has been adapting throughout the years, just as a person's feminism can be fluid throughout their life. Rather than being a static idea, feminism develops within a person, based on personality and experience. For this reason, infinite iterations of feminism are possible. In an effort to essentialize an incredibly complex ideology, this essay regards feminism as having the access and freedom to learn who you are as well as the ability to develop and protect that identity.

Over the course of the series, Hermione not only solidifies her own persona, but encourages others to pursue and to respect individual pursuits toward self-understanding. Her character is not without flaws—several critics have taken issue with some of her less desirable, or more traditionally feminine, character traits. Subsequently, she has been deemed a poor, if not anti-, feminist; at least, her actions in the early books have been pinpointed as such. By assessing Hermione's character development throughout the seven books as a whole, through the lens of feminist literary theory, this essay argues that Hermione is a positive feminist role model.

In order to draw comprehensive conclusions about Hermione as a feminist, this essay will be divided into two sections. Section I will provide context for the discussion by defining feminist children's literature and feminist characters, as well as presenting some of the negative readings of Hermione. From there, Section II will move into a textual and critical analysis of three of Hermione's defining feminist characteristics: her agency, her androgyny, and her relationships with males as she makes them more aware of the continued need for equality. The conclusion will bring these sections into conversation in order to posit that, both despite and because of her imperfections, Hermione Granger is a solid role model of modern feminism.

Feminist Characters in Children's Literature and Previous Critical Work on Hermione

> *"[Males] are also depicted as wiser, braver, more powerful, and more fun than females. [...] The relative powerlessness of females is most evident in the portrayal of the main character, Hermione"*—Heilman and Donaldson 2003, 146.

> *"You might belong in Gryffindor, Where dwell the brave at heart, Their daring, nerve, and chivalry [,] Set Gryffindors apart; Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw, If you've a ready mind, Where those of wit and learning, Will always find their kind"*—Rowling 1997, 118.

The expansive extent to which *Harry Potter* mania has permeated modern culture inevitably attracted the critical interests of scholars across various disciplines. Hermione's role in the series, and her status as a feminist, has been the focus of several articles and essays. A number of these works either disparage the extent to which the witch might be considered a feminist role model or disregard her feminism entirely. Yet, without Hermione choosing to provide Harry with the benefit of her friendship and brains, it is rather dubious that the trio would have saved the wizarding world. Or that Harry would have even lived through his first year at Hogwarts.

Prior to entering into an analysis of the feminism of Hermione, a cursory understanding of feminist children's novels and feminist characters within children's novels must be obtained. For the purpose of this essay, the writings of Roberta Trites will be relied upon heavily in order to establish the groundwork for the deconstruction of Hermione. Subsequently, the readings of Hermione conducted by Ruthann Mayes-Elma and Eliza Dresang will be referenced, highlighting some of their most ardent qualms regarding Hermione's feminism, or lack thereof. These discussions will provide the necessary context for the combined textual and critical examinations of Hermione as a feminist in Section II.

Roberta Trites (1997) has written at length on the subject of feminist children's literature, beginning her book, *Waking Sleeping Beauty*, by defining feminist children's novels as novels in which the protagonist "is empowered regardless of gender" (Trites 4). As such, the *Harry Potter* series is indisputably feminist; a plethora of characters, not only the trio, end the series as empowered youths, even if they began as disempowered children. Consider Neville Longbottom's transformation from the tearful boy wailing about his lost toad (Rowling 1997, 104), to the Gryffindor recognized by Professor Dumbledore for the courage required to "'stand up to our friends'" (Rowling 1997, 306), to the hero who successfully destroys the final horcrux after he "broke free of the Body-Bind Curse" and "with a great glittering, rubied handle [...] sliced off the great snake's head" (Rowling 2007, 587). Ginny Weasley similarly changes from "a pair of bright brown eyes" staring out from behind a door (Rowling 1999, 40) to a valuable member of Dumbledore's Army who is responsible for, among other things, Malfoy being "'stuck back in Umbridge's office with giant flying bogeys attacking him —'" (Rowling 2003, 761).

As Hermione is immediately established as a character with a voice and an awareness of self, she embodies several of the qualities that Trites ascribes to the female feminist protagonist from the outset of the series. Vocalization is one such characteristic: "If she does not already know how to speak for herself, [...] If she does not already know how

strong she is, [...] If she does not already know how to combine the strengths traditionally associated with femininity with the strengths that have not been, she learns" (Trites 11). Hermione is a complex character; she speaks for herself and is aware of her strengths from the moment she is introduced. Therefore, when she acts or shows emotions considered to be ultra-feminine it is difficult to not revert back to hegemonic associations of the feminine with weakness.

When Hermione first meets Harry and Ron onboard the Hogwarts Express, her authoritative, "bossy sort of" voice is one of her first attributes listed (Rowling 1997, 105). Voice is a tool that she capitalizes upon constantly: her voice enables her to answer questions correctly in classes, to master spells quickly, to cajole Harry and Ron into doing homework, to puzzle out clues during various adventures, to advocate for the rights of magical creatures, *ad nauseum*. The frequency with which Hermione speaks up for herself and other "Others" during the series does not experience a significant growth since she begins near capacity. Over time, however, Hermione learns to control her voice so that it is more influential and commanding when utilized.

Several factors contribute to Hermione's gained ability to manage her voice, one of which is the growth of her personal strength and her awareness of that power. Hermione originally exhibits her strength through her confidence in herself and her intellect. "'I've tried a few simple spells just for practice and it's all worked for me,'" (Rowling 1997, 105) she tells Harry and Ron during their first encounter. In this deceptively multifaceted introduction, Hermione can be read as assertive and self-assured as she outlines her abilities. The latter feminist trait requires a bit more fostering from Hermione; she is fragile enough to be reduced to tears in *SS* when Ron, having been bested by her in Charms, testily tells Harry "'it's no wonder no one can stand her [...] she's a nightmare'" (Rowling 1997, 172). Hermione's personal growth, as well as the reinforced support she receives once Harry and Ron become her friends, enables her to face similar criticisms later on in life with more composure. When Harry and Ron refuse to speak to her after she reports Harry's new Firebolt to McGonagall, Hermione avoids the boys by taking "refuge in the library" and attends to her studies in lieu of agonizing over the forthcoming reconciliation (Rowling 1999, 173). Her self-awareness allows her to hear critiques but not internalize them, a testament to her flourishing self-confidence.

From the outset, Hermione exhibits androgynous character traits, not only in her appropriation of "masculine" tendencies, but in her reappropriation and positive reimagining of conventional "feminine" ones as well. Although they gain friends throughout the series, the trio is a relatively isolated, yet decidedly strong, network. Associating masculinity with independence and femininity with community is common practice. Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) expounds upon this idea, writing "male

gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation" (Gilligan 8). The deep bonds between Hermione, Harry, and Ron prove to be gender reversals for all three. While the boys are adopting a feminine trait by relying heavily on the friendship of the trio, Hermione's lack of additional friends and her penchant for being by herself make her more masculine.

This is further exacerbated when placed in context of the feminist movement, which highlights and promotes the concept of women's community. Adrienne Rich (1983), in her essay on compulsory heterosexuality, outlines her concept of a lesbian continuum, the idea of woman-identified experience, to be an untapped source of power. According to Rich, the "institution of heterosexuality" has done a grievous wrong to womankind by denying women the ability to forge lasting communities with one another, resulting in "an incalculable loss to the power of all women *to change the social relations of the sexes to liberate ourselves and each other"* (Rich 1778). From the evidence Rowling provides in her books, Hermione chooses to remain outside of a woman-identified experience, perhaps because her most prominent traits are traditionally masculine and prevent her from identifying with the stereotypical feminine female characters that surround her. Alternatively, Hermione's decision to form a community primarily with males could be reflective of her status as a twenty-first century feminist, which emphasizes the community and partnership of men and women as necessary to and representative of gender equality.

Some of the more "feminine" aspects of Hermione's androgyny are also presented in positive ways, allowing Hermione to depict a reinvented femininity—a femininity not defined by weakness. Her maternal compassion that is bestowed upon Harry and Ron, fellow students who are ostracized, and mistreated magical creatures is coupled with her intellect and desire to nurture self-confidence in others. This causes her to attempt to help Hagrid save Buckbeak, his pet hippogriff in *PoA*. Hermione devotes the scarce spare time that she has to researching past court cases and helping devise a plan to save Buckbeak's life (Rowling 1999, 202). Once her feud with Ron is settled, he takes over Hermione's efforts with Buckbeak, displaying an acute awareness of her over-committed academic schedule and his own ability to apply himself to research in order to make an impact in the grander scheme. In this circumstance, Hermione's feminine compassion is aided by her masculine drive for success, allowing her take action. Simultaneously, her "nurturing" has led to Ron becoming more perceptive of other's needs as well as his own capabilities.

The above comparison of Hermione to Trites' outline of what a feminist heroine experiences in the course of her journey makes it difficult to understand how so many scholars have taken issue with calling Hermione a feminist. However, counter-examples

and additional complexities like comparing Hermione's role to the functions of other characters, namely male characters, have yet to be addressed. It is the early books in the series, namely the first two, that bear the brunt of the condemnation. Eliza Dresang (2002) problematizes the early characterization of Hermione, arguing that "the only obvious role in the first three books is that of highly intelligent, overachieving, somewhat annoying student" (Dresang 121). Hermione's personality can certainly be read as abrasive, especially in the first two books as her character development in these texts depict her as a caricature of a know-it-all. However, her role, even early in the series, is indispensable. In *SS*, Hermione is the one who notices that the three-headed dog Fluffy is standing guard over a trapdoor; without her, it would have taken Harry and Ron longer to realize, if they ever did, that whatever was stolen from Gringotts was being hidden inside Hogwarts.

The idea that Hermione is not an equal member of the trio until later on in the series, based on her absence from several critical scenes is erroneous. Firstly, Hermione's participation cannot be compared properly with Harry's because, as the title character, it is necessitated that he, in most cases, be the character who completes the heroic task. This is a plot device, not a comment on gender politics, especially because Rowling has repeatedly stated in interviews that she did not consciously make Harry a male, but that was how he came to her. Thus, Ron is looked to in order to establish Hermione's egalitarianism within the adventures. There are numerous scenes within the series in which Hermione is not present for the action or takes a secondary role: the troll in the bathroom; confronting Quirrell/Voldemort with the sorcerer's stone; the flying car; the Chamber of Secrets; confronting Voldemort after the third Triwizard Task; the Department of Mysteries after she is hexed; Ron's poisoning; the destruction of the first horcrux. Ron's list, however, is not all that dissimilar in length or importance: dispatching Norbert the dragon to the dragon-keepers; confronting Quirrell/Voldemort with the sorcerer's stone; the Chamber of Secrets; confronting Voldemort after the third Triwizard Task; the Department of Mysteries after he is attacked by a brain; dementors in the Ministry of Magic; Bellatrix Lestrange's torturing of Hermione; Nagini's attack in Godric's Hollow. In Harry's adventures, as in his personal life, Hermione and Ron are turned to uniformly, the difference being that Harry seeks them out for different reasons.

By comparing Hermione to feminist children's literature theories and dissecting some of the major criticism against reading her character as a feminist, there is enough evidence, both in support and in opposition, to dictate further investigation. On the surface, Hermione fulfils one conception of a feminist protagonist through her voice, strength, and androgynous traits. Even so, as the aforementioned critics have argued, there are aspects of Hermione's character and actions that can complicate or call into question her status as a feminist, at least according to certain branches of feminism. Section II

will conduct a further look at Hermione's agency, her embodiment of "extreme" feminine traits, and her friendship with Harry and Ron.

Agency, Androgyny and Non-Female Friendships of Hermione

> *"Gender differences, and the experience of difference, like differences among women, are socially and psychologically created and situated. [...] Difference and gender difference do not exist as things in themselves; they are created relationally, that is, in relationship"—Chodorow 1989, 100.*
>
> *"Ron and Ginny marched in obediently; Hermione, Neville, and Luna squashed themselves in after them...."*—Rowling 2003, 767.

Hermione is destined to be a heroine. Although one can be a female and a heroine without being a feminist heroine, this is not true for Hermione. She is sorted into Gryffindor, not Ravenclaw; she is credited with being the "cleverest witch of [her] age" (Rowling 1999, 253); she is one of the two friends who are faithful and driven enough to be a part of Harry's team. Dresang allots the beginning of her essay to tracing the origins of the name Hermione, finding the Hermiones in literary history to be intelligent women who sought fulfillment through the pursuit of personal identity and agency (Dresang 215–6). Rowling gave Hermione the name of impressive women and also wrote herself into the character, signifying "that she intends for Hermione to be a strong character who continues to gain strength and self-determination rather than finding it transient" (Dresang 226). Rowling might not have intentionally written feminist books or a feminist character, but the combination of feminine and masculine traits she gave to Hermione coupled with the agency Hermione develops and her efforts to convince others to question preconceptions about gender is incontrovertible evidence that Hermione is a feminist role model.

Although the discussions will inevitably intersect and overlap, Hermione's fully actualized agency, her extreme androgyny, and her endeavors to deconstruct gender assumptions will be analyzed separately. In addition to the previous examples of Hermione's voice and her role in the adventures, Hermione's agency is evidenced through her relentlessly focused pursuit of her personal goal: academic excellence. Using textual examples, additional evidence from Dresang, Heilman and Donalson, and Helene Cixous, Hermione's quest to prove herself in the classroom will be examined. This will lead into an assessment of how Hermione embodies both feminine and

masculine characteristics. Primarily addressing Hermione's inexplicable tendency to burst into tears or shriek during commonplace events, but remain calm in tense moments, the androgynous nature of these aspects will be ascertained, with references to Trites and Judith Butler. Finally, by examining the discontinuity displayed in Harry and Ron's ready acceptance of Hermione's academic and magical prowess in conjunction with theories presented by Trites and Natasha Walters, overarching conclusions can be drawn regarding Hermione's impact on others' feminist leanings.

As the most interesting applications of Hermione's genius tend to be in the midst of danger or excitement, it is understandable that critics swiftly belittle Hermione's agency, arguing that she utilizes her strength solely for the benefit of others. Elizabeth Heilman and Trevor Donaldson (2003) only give Hermione credit for her extensive knowledge of magic; they primarily argue that "she has only exercised her gift to aid Harry's quests rather than focusing on her own career. He is the hero; she is but an assistant" (Heilman and Donaldson 145). This assertion is problematic—Hermione is never simply the intellectual foil for Harry and Ron's adventures. Returning once again to the scene on the Hogwarts Express in which Hermione is introduced, she makes her personal pursuits known immediately: "I've learned all our course books by heart, of course" (Rowling 1997, 105–6). The underlying message here is that Hermione has come to Hogwarts with a goal: to become the most accomplished witch she can be. She has identified that studying and academic success is the path to this goal, presumably due to a history of scholastic achievements in her early education.

Skeptics most likely read Hermione's placement into Gryffindor as a necessary plot device; more optimistic readers are apt to find that although Hermione's brains could have earned her a place in Ravenclaw, her developing bravery branded her a lion. Dresang explains the magnitude of the implications presented by sorting Hermione into Gryffindor rather than Ravenclaw by recounting Harry's first impressions of the sorting; although the hat sometimes needs time to decide upon a house, "with Hermione, it shouted out Gryffindor without hesitation" (Dresang 227). Later in the series, Dumbledore reveals that the Sorting Hat considers each student's desires as it is placing them. In *OotP*, after explaining that she, as a fifth year, used a complicated seventh year spell, Hermione tells Dumbledore's Army that "'Well, the Sorting Hat did seriously consider putting me in Ravenclaw during my Sorting [...] but it decided on Gryffindor in the end'" (Rowling 2003, 399). If the Hat could not readily see the "daring, nerve, and chivalry" in Hermione at age eleven, her desire to achieve these qualities outweighed her propensity for "wit and learning." Furthermore, if Hermione's scholarly success in primary school can be presumed, the argument can also be made that Hermione is aware of her possession of intellect and drive to learn and wants to better herself by choosing to cultivate her bravery. By playing a role in the selection of her House at Hogwarts, Hermione chooses to be placed in a situation that will test her character; although she

cannot possibly predict the future that is in store for her, she is willing to have her courage tested. This interest in self-development returns Hermione's agency to her as she makes active decisions throughout the series that repeatedly place her next to Harry and Ron as they attempt to defeat one evil force or another.

Indisputably, Hermione's friendship with and the safety of Harry and Ron are important to her, as is saving Hogwarts and the wizarding world. Nevertheless, for the first six books, Hermione is able to effectively negotiate the sometimes-oppositional factions in her life while adhering to conventional definitions of education. In fact, Hermione often finds the time to tend to her educational needs prior to lending her intelligence to anything else. Before agreeing to accompany Harry on his mission to retrieve the sorcerer's stone, Hermione ensured that she received high marks on her first year exams (Rowling 1997, 271). Then, despite having to sit for her Ordinary Wizarding Level exams while attempting to help Harry with his visions of Voldemort and the nuances of his love life, creating Dumbledore's Army, and pursuing her quest for elf rights, Hermione received ten "Outstanding" marks and one "Exceeds Expectations"—the highest and second highest, respectively (Rowling 2005, 103).

Only in last book does Hermione forego her traditionally structured education, as she and Ron insist on joining Harry as he attempts to defeat Voldemort (Rowling 2005, 651). By the time *H-BP* concludes, Hermione has outgrown the conventional constraints of her chosen pursuit—she has excelled at school until it no longer holds a challenge for her. Rather than dismissing her education entirely, Hermione begins adapting her pursuit of knowledge to align with her needs as can be seen in *DH*; she prepares for the horcrux hunt by researching and packing books for the journey (Rowling 2007, 82–3). Hermione is responsible for locating the information on how to destroy the horcruxes: "'When I went back upstairs to get my things, it-it just occurred to me that the more we knew about them, the better it would be" (Rowling 2007, 88). Dresang addresses the ease with which readers can equate Hermione's personal growth to her academic achievements: as she tackles and excels in more subjects, Hermione becomes a stronger character. Thus it can be difficult to watch Hermione struggle with her overloaded timetable in *PoA*. Dresang, however, sees this as a crucial developmental experience, identifying Hermione's forfeiture of the Time-Turner as a "milestone of Hermione's learning how to reconcile her love of learning with the limitations of life" (Dresang 222).Choosing not to return to Hogwarts for her seventh and final year is another milestone; Hermione, out of no obligation to Harry, Ron, or anyone else, chooses to track down the horcruxes as that is where she feels she can "'do some good in the world'" (Rowling 2007, 105), a desire she verbalizes in to Rufus Scrimgeour in *DH*.

By acting of her own volition, Hermione can be labeled a feminist protagonist. Critics of Hermione's feminism are correct in their recognition of disconcerting examples in

which Hermione is reduced to being a humorous caricature of a helpless female. In *SS*, Harry and Ron find her "shrinking against the wall" with "her mouth open in terror" (Rowling 1997, 175) when they appear to rescue her from the troll, and in *H-BP* the promise of her O.W.L results causes her to "[flap] her hands hysterically," speak "in a terrified whisper," and "[squeal]" (Rowling 2005, 100–101). Yet, in the direst circumstances, when Hermione's bravery is most tested, she is able to either utilize her stereotypical feminine sentiments to her advantage or to resist them altogether. In *OotP*, Hermione prevents Professor Umbridge from torturing Harry and devises an opportunity to escape her office by pretending to cry and acquiesce to Umbridge's demands (Rowling 2003, 747). However, Hermione is only performing this feminine characteristic of crying under duress; "Though Hermione was sobbing desperately into her hands, there was no trace of a tear..." and then she wails "holding her hands more tightly over her face, not, Harry knew, out of anguish, but to disguise the continued absence of tears" (Rowling 2003, 747–748).

Hermione's actions suggest her understanding of socially constructed gender roles. Although Judith Butler's (2008) theory of gender performance emphasizes the unconscious corporeal signification that society has impressed upon men and women, she does not deny that these acts can be recognized and capitalized upon. Butler explains that "the action of gender requires a performance that is *repeated*. This performance is at once a reenactment and a reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (Butler 191). This concept is vital to this discussion as it is both a testament to Hermione's advanced, although perhaps subconscious, awareness of gender politics and it draws a correlation between Hermione and Trites' definition of female protagonists. Trites explains of a female protagonist that: "in the process of maintaining her personal strength, she often subverts traditional gender roles, playing on stereotypes and stretching their limits by incorporating characteristics that are typically associated with both genders into her actions" (Trites 11). In the aforementioned scene in Umbridge's office, Hermione does emulate stereotypical feminine behavior, but incorporates "masculine" characteristics such as quick decision-making. Combining these with her concern for others, Hermione effectively amalgamates characteristics assigned to both genders. Although she enacts the stereotypes of femininity in positive and negative ways, Hermione's personal strength and her quick mind allow her to access and manipulate these typecasts to her benefit.

Speaking to both her strength and her ability to reinvent "feminine" mannerisms and enact stereotypically masculine characteristics, Hermione, especially in the later books, does not loose her head in a crisis. Furthermore, when Hermione finds herself in a predicament, she often is able to think on her feet, relying on instinct, which has been traditionally relegated to the masculine sphere. When she is tortured by Bellatrix

Lestrange in *DH*, Hermione manages to devise a story that ultimately allows them to escape (Rowling 2007, 378). It is a testament to Hermione's strength that she is able to think so clearly while in excruciating pain—Mad-eye Moody once described the Cruciatus Curse as "'Pain [...] you don't need thumbscrews or knives to torture someone if you can perform the Cruciatus Curse'" (Rowling 2000, 215). Later Harry tells her, "'you were amazing—coming up with that story when she was hurting you like that—'" (Rowling 2007, 392). In this circumstance, although Hermione sobs and lets loose more than one "terrible, drawn-out scream" (Rowling 2007, 375), both the circumstance and Hermione's "masculine" strategizing negate any residual associations of these actions with "femininity." Additionally, there is the simultaneous feminization of Ron as she is being tormented; Ron is reduced to "shaking," "bellow," "writhe and struggle," and "half sobbing as he pounded the walls with his fists" (Rowling 2007, 375–377). He does maintain the presence of mind to remember that he still has his Deluminator, so those in the dungeons can work on getting free (Rowling 2007, 376). It takes a near-death situation, but when social defenses are down, Hermione capitalizes upon her androgyny and is able to escape.

As the feminist movement is diverse in its goals and the interpretations of feminism, so too can the reactions to Hermione be dissimilar. To some extent, Hermione's feminist nature could be strengthened if she did not react to everyday events with so many negatively connoted emotions, or if the boys were described similarly from time to time. However, in Hermione's androgynous combination of intellectual strength and bravery with exaggerated emotional responses and maternal compassion, she becomes more powerful by reclaiming traditionally demeaning qualities and incorporating them into a persona that ultimately demands respect and admiration. Trites speaks to this idea:

> The most powerful way that feminist children's novels reverse traditional gender roles, however, is by their reliance on the protagonist's agency. In these novels, the protagonist is more aware of her own agency, more aware of her ability to assert her own personality and to enact her own decisions, at the end of the novel than she has been at the beginning. Unlike her literary antecedents in such novels as *Little Women* or *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), the feminist protagonist need not squelch her individuality in order to fit into society. Instead, her agency, her individuality, her choice, and her nonconformity are affirmed and even celebrated [Trites 6].

Hermione's choice to use her talents to help her friends (who happen to be male) should be "affirmed and even celebrated," rather than be a point of contention in regard to her feminism. A Hermione that fearlessly faces down trolls at age eleven might not be accessible to everyone; a Hermione that shrieks from time to time but never disappoints

during a moment of need can, even begrudgingly, be recognized as a feminist role model by all.

By definition, androgyny is "having the characteristics or nature of both male and female" (Merriam-Webster). Once a faction of the feminist movement began defining feminism as the appropriation of sociohistorically conceived notions of masculine and feminine traits, it became inevitable that men, in addition to women, would be called upon in order to advance the cause. Walters outlines new feminism by presenting it as the inverse of feminism of the past, which worked to provide women with access to masculine domains:

> the impetus of feminism in the next century will be to give men the keys to the feminine kingdom. Here, they will discover the delights [...] of feeling secure and wanted at home; of being linked into strong social and family communities that do not just rely on their status [...] [Walters 153].

Feminism in the twenty-first century is about women and men finding a balance between external fulfillment and internal satisfaction. Walters goes on to say that, "now, feminism belongs to men as well as to women" (Walters 153). This, of course, comes about by the distortion of the demarcation between "the feminine" and "the masculine."

As a twenty-first century feminist, Hermione recognizes the boys' adherence to patriarchal values. Instead of distancing herself from them or resigning herself to their latent prejudices against "Others," Hermione attempts to expose Harry and Ron to more open-minded views. Androgyny is indigenous to Hermione's personality, but it is a concept that she has to introduce to and encourage within Ron and, to a lesser extent, Harry. In a quotidian depiction reflective of real-life, Hermione's efforts are continuous, if not always successful.

The respect that Harry and Ron develop and subsequently display for Hermione's intelligence and perpetual preparedness grows exponentially throughout the series. Although their respect for her brains originally manifests itself in securing her assistance with homework, they develop a habit of turning to Hermione for the answer or to execute a complicated spell. Overtime, they take her abilities—essentially her academic and magical superiority—for granted. When warding off the Dementors in the Ministry of Magic in *DH*, Harry is understanding of what he considers to be Hermione's only spell-casting shortcoming: "'*Expec-expecto patronum*,' said Hermione. Nothing happened. 'It's the only spell she ever has trouble with,' Harry told a completely bemused Mrs. Cattermole. 'Bit unfortunate, really ... come on, Hermione...'" (Rowling 2007, 217). Ron, too, expects incredible feats from Hermione, but his more volatile personality causes him to become accusatory rather than compassionate when she

struggles. When they argue in the tent about the abysmal cooking, Hermione does not realize the extent to which Ron regards her magical prowess; she assumes that, "'I'm always the one who ends up sorting out the food; because I'm a *girl*, I suppose!'" when, in fact Ron expects so much from her "'because [she's] supposed to be the best at magic!'" (Rowling 2007, 241). These examples of the boys,' particularly Ron's, appreciation for Hermione's talents conflict with their conceptions of gender roles as defined by their internalization of male privilege.

Throughout the series, Harry exhibits a more equitable view of females than Ron. Apart from sharing a meaningful glance at Ron meant to express dismay over who was to accompany them to the Ministry of Magic in *OotP*, Harry tends to make judgments about people based on their actions, not their gender (Rowling 2003, 763). Ron, on the other hand, is quick to make arbitrary decisions about people, often based upon whether they are male or female. Ginny, for example, is a victim of Ron's chauvinistic opinions; Ron gets excessively angry, more so than the rest of his brothers, when she extends herself beyond the boundaries of the feminine sphere by excelling at Quidditch and actively dating. Even though their relationship is unstable, Hermione's constant presence and impact in Ron's life forces him to start appreciating women in non-traditional roles.

Two prominent examples within the series display Harry and Ron's tendency to assume that someone is male until they are proven incorrect: the Half-Blood Prince and RAB. Although both individuals do turn out to be male, Hermione does not apologize for her insistence that the boys must recognize women as equal to men. After listening to Hermione's protests for several months, Harry finally explains to her that what once might have been a prejudiced assumption that these mysterious figures were male, overtime he had developed specific reasons to believe that they were not women: "'The truth is that you don't think a girl would have been clever enough,' said Hermione angrily. 'How can I have hung around with you for five years and not think girls are clever?' said Harry, stung by this" (Rowling 2003, 538). Hermione is somewhat blinded by her efforts to have the boys embrace feminism; she is unaware of the extent to which she has altered their perceptions about women by simply being herself.

Through the personal strength that Hermione's dogged pursuit of academic distinction, which she applies in both classroom and practical settings, Hermione displays her possession of agency, which in turn defines her as feminist. The androgynous amalgamation of her intellectual power and her emotional outbursts position her distinctly into the sphere of modern feminism; she is powerful, has her own goals, and the combination of feminine and masculine traits adds strength to her character. As a result of Hermione's efforts, which range from inadvertent to didactic, to make Harry and Ron more aware of what contemporary feminism means, she illustrates how modern

feminism is for men as well as women. In her famed *Laugh of the Medusa*, Helene Cixous addressees the universality, or lack thereof, of women:

> But first it must be said that in spite of the enormity of the repression that has kept them in the "dark"—that dark which people have been trying to make them accept as their attribute—there is, at this time, no general woman, no one typical woman [Cixous 161].

Cixous verbalizes why readings of an anti-feminist Hermione exist, and why they should be more cautious in their denigration of this particular female protagonist. There is no one ideal woman, just as there is no ideal feminist or feminism. Hermione is a feminist role model because she grasps the foundations of feminism—sexual equality—and remains true to herself, overcoming the pressures of society and tradition.

Conclusion

> *Life for both sexes—and I look at them, shouldering their way along the pavement—is arduous, difficult, a perpetual struggle. It calls for gigantic courage and strength. More than anything, perhaps, creatures of illusion that we are, it calls for confidence in oneself*—Woolf 44.

Taking her agency, her androgyny, and her efforts to spread her feminist views into consideration, it is impossible to claim that Hermione Granger is a perfect feminist. Yet, it is her imperfections, and the fact that many of her actions are aligned with the theories of sexual equality, which make her a valuable feminist role model. Feminist writer Alice Walker has said, "In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful" (Walker n.pag.). A quote from Walker is relevant here in context with the references to Woolf. Walker took issue with Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* as it disregarded women of color; once any movement begins to make specific definitions or claims about their beliefs, exclusion becomes inevitable. Just as the feminist movement can only continue to gain momentum by accepting that a universal belief cannot and will not have unanimous translations and manifestations, Hermione should be accepted as a feminist role model for presenting and embodying one expression of feminism.

In a society that equates success and influence with visibility and celebrity status, it is difficult to recognize that quieter struggles and journeys can be as, if not more,

remarkable. Rowling's critics argue that by making the focal character of her series male, Rowling did a monstrous disservice to her sex. Conjecturing about how the series would have changed if Hermione had been the main character is fruitless as well as unwarranted. Part of the reason why Hermione is such a solid character and powerful feminist role model is because she refuses to be shackled by the role of supporting character and establishes an identity for herself within Harry's narrative. Hermione's quest for recognition is reflective of the metanarrative of the contemporary feminist movement; an historical pattern of patriarchal values cannot be undone overnight, thus change demands leaders with the self-confidence and perseverance to overcome the obstacle of being female in a male-privileged society. Although it requires assurance and self-awareness, this transformation will not occur as the result of an individual's achievements, but rather the product of communal efforts and blurred demarcation of the characteristics of women and men. Hermione achieves her personal goals through combining her own ambition and drive with the support of her friends and mentors; meanwhile everyone—fellow characters and readers alike—obtains access to a new understanding and respect for gender equality.

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Hermione as Scholar

"Books! And Cleverness!"

Hermione's Wits

TARA FOSTER

Although, as Hermione says, there may be "'more important things—[like] friendship and bravery'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 287) in the wizarding world of Harry Potter, we see time and time again that Hermione's intelligence and book-learning play a critical role in setting the magical world to rights. Without Hermione's logic, Voldemort would not have been defeated in the quest for the Sorcerer's Stone; had Hermione not pursued all of the subjects in which she excelled despite the scheduling conflict, she would not have been granted the privilege of the Time-Turner, which allowed her and Harry to save both Buckbeak and Sirius Black; in his will, Albus Dumbledore bequeaths a book to Hermione, knowing that her studies and intellectual curiosity have equipped her to unearth the puzzle contained within, a puzzle that holds the key to the salvation of the wizarding world. This essay will trace the major instances of Hermione's brilliance and the portrait that emerges of an exemplary girl who embraces and repeatedly receives recognition for her intellectual talents.

In the opening book of the series, *SS*, we are introduced to the intellectually eager young Hermione Granger as she travels on the Hogwarts Express to begin her magical education. Her first encounter with Harry Potter and Ron Weasley sets the tone for their future interaction and for her own performance at Hogwarts: she has already enjoyed a perfect success rate when performing spells and has memorized all of her course books. She tells them that she has "'heard'" that Hogwarts is "'the very best school of witchcraft there is'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 105), but as a Muggle-born witch, it is unlikely that Hermione has had much opportunity to hear about the school's reputation. Although it is possible that she discussed the school's merits with other wizards while collecting her school supplies in Diagon Alley, it is far more likely that she purchased additional books in Flourish and Blotts, as suggested by her mention of *Hogwarts, A History* when she explains the enchanted ceiling of the castle's Great Hall and by her knowledge of Harry's history, gleaned from *Modern Magical History*, *The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts*, and *Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century*. When Harry seems surprised and befuddled by her knowledge, Hermione replies "'Goodness, didn't you know, I'd have found out everything I could if it was me'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 106). Hermione's thirst for knowledge and penchant for thorough research will play a key

role in all of the adventures undertaken by the three protagonists and in the overthrow of the greatest threat to the wizarding community, Lord Voldemort.

Once she arrives at Hogwarts, Hermione initially shows some inflexibility with regard to rules and rule-breaking. After the brief encounter with Fluffy following the fiasco of the wizard's duel, Hermione chastises Harry and Ron for taking Malfoy's bait and putting them all at risk: "'I hope you're pleased with yourselves. We could all have been killed—or worse, expelled. Now, if you don't mind, I'm going to bed'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 162). Her skewed priorities soon undergo a change, however. We first see her break the rules in the episode with the troll in *SS*, a scene often condemned by a variety of critics. The most repeated objection is twofold: that Hermione's emotional display, shrieking and cowering against the wall, supports stereotypical portraits of women who are weakened by their emotion (e.g. Schoefer, 2000), and that Hermione appears as a passive female here, waiting to be rescued by male figures, despite her knowledge of and ability to perform the spell used to rescue her (e.g. Bradshaw, 2007, as cited in Andrade, 2008). In their study of the examples of the moral development of children found in the novels, Lana Whited and Katherine Grimes (2002) discuss this and other displays of emotion from Hermione and point out that they are often linked to her concern for the welfare of others (p. 191).[1] They state that "one might well ask whether those who criticize her emotionalism, particularly her enthusiastic support of Harry, ... vie[w] Harry's attempts to keep the dark forces in check as superior to, for example, Hermione's attention to the feelings of Neville Longbottom" when she apologizes before petrifying him at the end of the novel (Whited & Grimes, 2002, p. 192). Glenna Andrade (2008) expresses another reasonable take on Hermione's emotional reaction to the troll: "Anyone, male or female, might react with terror when surprised by an evil monster, especially for the first time. (After all, Harry and Ron were forewarned before the confrontation)" (p. 174). She further suggests that "perhaps Rowling began with the stereotype of the 'wimpy girl' so Hermione could transcend it" (Andrade, 2008, p. 174), for Hermione's "wimpiness" has evaporated before the scene comes to an end. When the professors arrive and demand an explanation, Harry and Ron flounder before Hermione comes to their rescue with her quick wits. She takes the blame for the incident, explaining, "'I went looking for the troll because I—I thought I could deal with it on my own—you know, because I've read all about them'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 177), thereby saving the boys from potential expulsion once again. A "speechless" Harry recognizes the boldness and courage that Hermione exhibits in speaking up despite her fear: "Hermione was the last person to do anything against the rules, and here she was, pretending she had, to get them out of trouble" (Rowling, 1997, p. 178). She capitalizes on her book learning even as she displays her courage and wit. Her classroom demonstrations of her reading and of her eagerness to succeed in its practical applications render the excuse that she formulates quite plausible. Furthermore, she

does indeed know how to use *Wingardium Leviosa*, for she did just teach the spell to Ron; in sharing her knowledge with him, Hermione saves both the boys and herself.

Once the Trio's friendship has been firmly established and they begin to investigate the secret of the trapdoor that only Hermione was quick-witted enough to recognize when they first glimpsed it, Hermione's scholarship and intelligence again come to the fore. She saves Harry on the Quidditch pitch while Ron, aghast, hesitates ineffectually in the stands. She has the presence of mind to turn the binoculars on Snape and recognizes the signs of a jinx: "'I know a jinx when I see one, Hagrid, I've read all about them! You've got to keep eye contact, and Snape wasn't blinking at all, I saw him!'" (Rowling, 1997, pp. 192–3). Her rescue really came about because she inadvertently knocked over Professor Quirrell, who was struggling to overcome Snape's counterjinx, but her learning served her well nonetheless; as she explains in *OotP* (Rowling, 2003), a counterjinx is "'just a name people give their jinxes when they want to make them sound more acceptable'" (p. 316). When Hagrid lets slip that Nicolas Flamel is involved, Hermione leads the boys to the library to research the name, and she urges them to continue their research while she is away for the Christmas holidays. Harry follows her advice, and although his foray into the Restricted Section is short-lived, he comes across the Mirror of Erised, which gives him the key to defeating Voldemort in the final stage of the labyrinth. After Harry sees the Chocolate Frog card featuring Nicolas Flamel, Hermione's erudition allows her to find the answer that continues to elude Harry and Ron. Her exasperation with the boys' ignorance ('Oh, *honestly*, don't you two read?'" [Rowling, 1997, p. 219]) cannot mask her elation at having discovered the solution, and her skills confirm Andrade's (2008) observation that like Nancy Drew, "Hermione conforms to the sleuth of girl detective fiction who uses intelligence to solve mysteries" (p. 166).

Hermione's most heroic demonstration of learning and cleverness comes, of course, during the final race to save the Sorcerer's Stone. Again she will draw on her reputation for academic achievement to create a credible cover story for her reconnaissance mission: "'You can pretend to be waiting for Professor Flitwick, you know.' [Ron] put on a high voice, 'Oh Professor Flitwick, I'm so worried, I think I got question fourteen *b* wrong'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 269). When it becomes clear that the Trio will have to get past Fluffy and the other enchantments, Hermione accepts the risk of being expelled and prepares for the enchantments they will have to face by reviewing her texts. As Whited and Grimes (2002) remark, "Hermione is willing to break the rules for what she perceives to be a higher good" (p. 201); she acknowledges that the practical application of her studies, saving the world from Voldemort's return, takes precedence over her personal desire for knowledge. If faced with expulsion, her greatest weapon will again be her scholarship: "'Flitwick told me in secret that I got a hundred and twelve percent on his exam. They're not throwing me out after that'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 271). Once

they get through the trap door, Hermione saves both Ron and Harry from the Devil's Snare thanks to her schoolwork, and she keeps track of the challenges that they have faced and which professors must have devised them. As she and Harry reach the penultimate test, Hermione shines again. Eliza Dresang (2002) points out the lamentable omission of this scene from the film version, noting that "from the feminist analytical framework, this is a blatant, not a subtle, denial of agency" (p. 239). In the novel, however, Hermione now demonstrates her wits in solving Professor Snape's riddle, having already shown her book learning by defeating Professor Sprout's plant. Delighted at the problem before her, she exclaims, "'This isn't magic—it's logic—a puzzle. A lot of the greatest wizards haven't got an ounce of logic, they'd be stuck in here forever'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 285). Indeed, "'for the use of cool logic in the face of fire'" (Rowling, 1997, p. 305), Hermione earns fifty points for Gryffindor and the public praise of the headmaster. In this first confrontation with Voldemort, Hermione acquits herself admirably, "establishing her equality with the male characters" (Dresang, 2002, p. 239).[2]

In their second year, Hermione again demonstrates how vital she and her intellect are to the success of Harry's endeavors. She again turns to books to find more information about the Chamber of Secrets, although neither Ron, who comments that Hermione must be "'trying to read the whole library before Christmas'" (Rowling, 1998, p. 147), nor Harry has thought to research the legend. When her search proves fruitless because the text that she needs is unavailable, she turns to another academic source: her professor. Hermione surprises Professor Binns with her curiosity, for she is one of the only students to pose a question in his classroom, and her example prompts the other students to press for more details. Her engagement in the classroom pays dividends once more when she suggests that they Trio try using the Polyjuice Potion to find out more information: "'Snape mentioned it in class a few weeks ago ... but getting hold of the recipe will be very difficult. Snape said it was in a book called *Moste Potente Potions* and it's bound to be in the Restricted Section of the library'" (Rowling, 1998, pp. 159–60). Luckily for the boys, Hermione pays attention in Potions as well as in Herbology. Getting a book from the Restricted Section requires a teacher's signature, and Hermione again takes advantage of her scholarly reputation. She tells Professor Lockhart that reading this particular book would help her understand one of his own books, *Gadding with Ghouls*. She lends credence to her excuse by remarking, "'So clever, the way you trapped that last one with the tea-strainer'" (Rowling, 1998, p. 163), for she has clearly read the entire text and recalled it in detail. Although an incompetent teacher, Lockhart recognizes nevertheless that Hermione is "'the best student of the year'" and agrees to help (Rowling, 1998, p. 163).

It is important to note, however, that the quest to solve the riddle of the Chamber of Secrets is not merely Harry's endeavor and that Hermione is not merely an enabler, as

was also the case with the Sorcerer's Stone. While Ruthann Mayes-Elma (2006) says that "as long as a woman is enacting her agency in order to help or further the interests of the man, it is all right, whereas women are not 'permitted' to enact agency in order to help or further their own interests" (p. 95), Andrade (2008) points out that this is not the case in *CoS*, where her transformation "from companion to co-conspirator becomes a major turning point in Hermione's development as the sleuth who decides what must be done and how to do it, regardless of the rules" (p. 167). Hermione sees the potential of the Polyjuice Potion, she secures the required signature in order to obtain the potion book, she steals the necessary ingredients, she brews the terribly difficult potion, and she devises the plan for administering it and interrogating Draco. By enacting this plan, Hermione does further her own interests, for she is at risk: "'*I* don't want to break rules, you know. *I* think threatening Muggle-borns is far worse than brewing up a difficult potion'" (Rowling, 1998, p. 165). Hermione is, after all, a Muggle-born witch, so the threat does target her. However, more is at stake than her personal safety; other Muggle-born students, so-called "blood traitor" students, and the school itself are all under threat. As in the quest to save the Sorcerer's Stone, which the children knew Voldemort would use to return to power, Hermione uses her learning and intelligence to serve the greater good. Indeed, as the title of this volume suggests, she uses them to save the world.

Ultimately, Hermione solves the riddle of the Chamber of Secrets with her books and her cleverness. Despite the fact that the basilisk puts her temporarily out of commission, it does not defeat her, for she has already armed herself through her research. Ron correctly assumes that "'Hermione'll probably have all the answers when they wake her up'" (Rowling, 1998, p. 285), but the boys do not need to wait until then to receive Hermione's information. As they visit Hermione in the infirmary, she transmits her knowledge despite her petrified state. While one might question the likelihood that Hermione would deface a library book by ripping out and writing on one of its pages, the scene in which Ron and Harry pry this artifact from her grasp underscores Leslee Friedman's (2009) observation that "Rowling has always very clearly aligned Hermione's powers with her relationship to text" (p. 193). Friedman goes on to state that Hermione frequently "enter[s] into a relationship with the text where she not only receives information but finds ways of engendering action with that information" (p. 193). The page represents Hermione's achievement and communicates with Harry in her stead: "And beneath this, a single word had been written, in a hand Harry recognized as Hermione's. *Pipes*. It was as though somebody had just flicked a light on in his brain" (Rowling, 1998, p. 290). Her research has uncovered the crucial facts, and her intelligence has interpreted the evidence to complete the solution; she saves both herself and Penelope Clearwater in the short term and Ginny and all of Hogwarts in the long term.

Hermione's books and cleverness triumph again in *PoA*. She sets the stage for this success at the end of her second year, when she opts to sign up for all five of the elective subjects offered at Hogwarts in addition to the seven core courses, and we see her immersed in *Ancient Runes Made Easy* before she has even solved the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets (Rowling, 1998, p. 254). Initially, we only get an oblique indication of how Hermione can manage to take courses that meet simultaneously: "'Hermione,' said Ron, '...they've got you down for about ten subjects a day. There isn't enough *time*'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 98). The emphasis on "time" is one of the few hints supplied by the narrative; we remain as ignorant of Hermione's Time-Turner as Harry and Ron until just before Sirius Black is doomed to receive the Dementor's Kiss. Hermione reveals that her academic prowess and intellectual curiosity earned her the device as she finally explains how she has been attending all of her lessons. An exceptional student, Hermione merits exceptional treatment, and she has Professor McGonagall's unstinting support: "'She had to write all sorts of letters to the Ministry of Magic so I could have one. She had to tell them that I was a model student, and that I'd never, ever use it for anything except my studies'" (Rowling, 1999, pp. 395–6). But Hermione does, of course, use the Time-Turner for something other than her studies; as in the first two novels in the series, Hermione exhibits her moral reasoning and prefers to save Sirius and Buckbeak. The "'cleverest witch of [her] age'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 346) again succeeds in saving innocent lives.

Mendlesohn (2002) sees Hermione's use of the Time-Turner in a negative light, stating that "this proves to be an opportunity to humiliate her and to emphasize her inability to be 'sensible' rather than excessive" (p. 168). The novel does not seem to bear this statement out, however. Although her workload is very heavy and becomes increasingly burdensome, Hermione manages both her coursework and extracurricular research, for she takes on the extra work of preparing a defense for Buckbeak that Hagrid can use at the hearing. Hagrid tells the boys, "'Bitten off more'n she can chew, if yeh ask me, all the work she's tryin' ter do. Still found time ter help me with Buckbeak's case, mind.... She's found some really good stuff fer me ... reckon he'll stand a good chance now...'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 274). This reminder of Hermione's effort to assist Hagrid serves to humiliate not Hermione, but Harry and Ron, who both feel ashamed that they have failed to help. It also serves to validate and valorize Hermione's ethic of care as she once again uses her intellect to help her friends. Sarah Maier (2005) claims that "it is not until the fourth book, Hermione Granger, although the brains of the Trio, is presented more as a snitch than as a heroine [*sic*]" (p. 26, note 7). This rather puzzling remark presumably refers to Hermione's estrangement from Harry and Ron after she surmises that Sirius Black sent Harry the Firebolt and reports her conclusions to Professor McGonagall, another instance of her logic serving her ethic of care, but Hagrid chastises the boys for giving Hermione the cold shoulder. He reprimands them for caring more about a broomstick than about their friend, a rebuke echoed by McGonagall

when she accuses Oliver Wood of being more interested in winning the Quidditch match than in the safety of one of his players. These comments clearly posit Hermione's reasoning as superior, for she does care more about people than she does about brooms.

Rather than humiliating Hermione, then, the Time-Turner highlights her academic and intellectual accomplishments and how much the wizarding community benefits from those accomplishments. In addition to giving her another opportunity for heroism, the device also provides her with an opportunity for greater self-knowledge and personal growth, a development that makes her a stronger role model for young readers. Joanne Brown and Nancy St. Clair (2002) remark that "empowered girls in young adult literature ... come to know themselves well, both their strengths and their weaknesses, and they resist letting themselves be defined by others" (p. 49). Hermione, who is now fourteen and thus moving quickly toward young adulthood, comes to recognize a fear of failure as one of her weaknesses in *PoA*. Ron hints at this fear when the class meets their first boggart, suggesting that for Hermione, it would take the form of "'a piece of homework that only got nine out of ten'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 140), and his suspicion is confirmed during the final exam for the class: "'P—P—Professor McGonagall!' Hermione gasped, pointing into the trunk [containing the boggart]. 'Sh—she said I'd failed everything!'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 319). Having taken on five elective courses rather than just two or three, Hermione is reluctant to admit that she might have made a mistake and continues to attend all of her classes until the end of the year, despite her impatience with Professor Trelawney's incompetence. Although Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil fawn over Trelawney and her frequent predictions of death, Hermione expresses her disdain early in the year, saying, "'If being good at Divination means I have to pretend to see death omens in a lump of tea leaves, I'm not sure I'll be studying it much longer!'" (Rowling, 1999, p. 111). She points out the faulty logic in believing that Trelawney predicted the death of Lavender's rabbit, and when the teacher claims to see another Grim in Harry's crystal ball, Hermione refuses to be persuaded like her classmates and ultimately quits the class. The film version weakens Hermione's character by showing her attempt to conform and pretend to see a Grim, but the Hermione of the novel stands by her logic, even if it leads her to make an unpopular decision, such as reporting the Firebolt to McGonagall. Hermione demonstrates that she is capable of being "sensible" since she makes the choice to give up Muggle Studies in addition to Divination. She proves her abilities by earning three hundred and twenty percent on her Muggle Studies exam but frees herself from the unwanted burden of the additional coursework.

One of the discoveries that Hermione makes while doing her homework in *PoA* proves to be the key to one of her victories in *GoF*, namely the taming of Rita Skeeter (the full import of this victory and its benefit to the wizarding world become apparent in *OotP*). In an effort to stamp out Rita's dissemination of misinformation and prejudice,

Hermione begins a time-consuming extracurricular project to find out how the journalist can be privy to so much of what goes on at Hogwarts. Harry "frankly marveled at the fact that Hermione could research magical methods of eavesdropping as well as everything else they had to do" (Rowling, 2000, p. 548), but it is certainly not the first time that he has had occasion to wonder at Hermione's scholarship. In *PoA*, Hermione learns about Animagi in Transfiguration and conducts thorough research as she completes her assignment, finding out that the Ministry of Magic requires Animagi to register themselves and provide pertinent details about their transformations. Harry "marvel[s] inwardly at the effort Hermione put into her homework" (Rowling, 1999, p. 351), as well he might, particularly when one recalls that Hermione has the work for twelve classes plus the research to help Buckbeak on her plate. This research pays off when Hermione realizes that Rita has failed to register herself and is therefore in violation of both wizard law and school policies when she eavesdrops in the form of a beetle within the Hogwarts grounds. Hermione's desire to thwart Rita Skeeter stems in part from the journalist's prejudicial article about Hagrid, revealing him to be a half-giant and sending him into hiding. Hermione becomes sensitized to racism and intolerance in the magical community in *GoF*, and she uses her intellectual gifts to raise awareness of the unjust treatment of house elves by wizards, an example of her intellectual engagement and activism discussed elsewhere in this volume.[3]

Hermione shows no inclination to abandon her academic achievements and intellectualism in order to fit in or to attract boys, as do many girls as they enter adolescence, nor do her achievements bring about any particular backlash. In this pivotal year at Hogwarts that sees the arrival of foreign students and a sharp increase in adolescent dating rituals such as the Yule Ball, Hermione's teachers continue to shower her with accolades, she maintains lasting and supportive friendships, and she stirs the interest of several of the boys. Elizabeth Heilman and Trevor Donaldson (2009) state that "it is significant that the two 'bright' females [Hermione and McGonagall] are unattractive and unsexy" (p. 151), suggesting that the series promotes the idea that girls must stifle their intelligence in order to be considered appealing. They note that Harry and Ron, "not described as good looking themselves, get dance dates with 'the two best looking girls in the year' (*GoF*, p. 411)" (Heilman & Donaldson, 2009, p. 152). One of these twin girls, Padma Patil, is in Ravenclaw, and is therefore very bright; another Ravenclaw, Cho Chang, is another example of a girl who is considered both bright and attractive. Furthermore, Hermione herself receives no fewer than three invitations to the Yule Ball, indicating that her intelligence does not put off the boys and contradicting Mendlesohn's (2002) declaration that she "can be liked only by association, or when she chooses to conform" (p. 174). Indeed, it seems that Viktor Krum, the internationally famous sports star, has no objection to Hermione's braininess. Harry notices that Viktor haunts the library when he and Hermione are there, and Hermione later reveals that Viktor "'said he'd been coming up to the library every day to try and talk to [her], but he

hadn't been able to pluck up the courage'" (Rowling, 2000, p. 422). In the film version, Hermione tells Harry that Viktor likes to watch her study, signifying that he finds her brains as attractive as her appearance.

Heilman and Donaldson (2009) also criticize the shrinking of Hermione's teeth as indicative of "strong, negative body image messages," arguing that "Hermione is only presented as the attractive date of Viktor Krum after she undergoes a form of plastic surgery" (p. 151). Karley Adney (2004), however, rightly points out that "Hermione did not change her teeth just for Krum, and ... even more importantly, her parents are dentists who support her altering the appearance of her teeth by encouraging her to wear braces" (p. 104). Hermione's attitude about appearance does not suggest that she has received the message "Get a makeover. You are not okay" (Heilman & Donaldson, 2009, p. 152). She expresses her contempt for Ron's shallow mind-set with regard to girls: "'Oh, I see,' Hermione said, bristling. 'So basically, you're going to take the best-looking girl who'll have you, even if she's completely horrible?'" (Rowling, 2000, pp. 394–5). When he fails to find a date, she mocks, "'All the good-looking ones taken, Ron? ... Well, I'm sure you'll find someone *somewhere* who'll have you.' (Rowling, 2000, p. 400). Some of her scorn is, of course, motivated by her growing feelings for Ron, but she clearly disapproves of boys who value a girl's appearance more than anything else. As for her own makeover, with her elegant hairstyle and beautiful robes, Hermione seems to be "reclaiming the right not only to the term 'girl' but also to 'girly pleasures' such as shopping and dressing up, trivialized by the culture at large and criticized by the second wave [feminists] as complicitous in sexism" (Karlyn, 2006, p. 64). She chooses to dress up for the ball but does not adopt this new look on a permanent basis, telling Harry that using the Sleekeazy Potion is "'way too much bother to do every day'" (Rowling, 2000, p. 433). In other words, she will dress up to please herself, on her own terms, since her self-esteem tells her that she is "okay" just as she is, brains and all.

In addition to using her brains to hinder Rita Skeeter and help the house-elves, Hermione continues to share her knowledge with Harry, aiding him in the first task of the Triwizard Tournament by teaching him the summoning charm that she masters at the beginning of the school year. Her attempt to help him in the second task, however, is unsuccessful because the book that they need is in Neville's possession, and, as Friedman (2009) remarks, "the men of this series neither engage the actual texts, nor do they spread their knowledge of text to each other" (p. 196), unlike Hermione. At the beginning of the novel, Harry's scar hurts and he imagines that Hermione would advise him to contact Dumbledore while she consulted her books for something that might help. According to Meredith Cherland (2008–9), "he imagines her as shrill and panicky, as much too quick to trust the authority of a book, and as much too willing to appeal to the established authority of the headmaster" (p. 278), suggesting that she shows no

discernment with regard to authority or that her scholarship is somehow sterile, simply "bookish" rather than engaged and resourceful. Hermione's scholarship extends beyond her books, as we have seen, beginning in the first novel. We see a counterpoint to Hermione's engagement with her texts in Professor Quirrell, who was incapable of making the transition from book learning to practical application. Hagrid tells Harry, "'Poor bloke. Brilliant mind. He was fine while he was studyin' outta books but then he took a year off ter get some first-hand experience.... never been the same since'" (Rowling, 1997, pp. 70–1). Quirrell's character succumbs to Voldemort and becomes a pawn for evil rather than an agent for justice. Professor Lockhart also fails to connect books and actions, for he appropriated the actions of others to compose his fraudulent text. His inability to control the Cornish Pixies contrasts sharply with Hermione's "immobilizing two pixies at once with a clever Freezing Charm" (Rowling, 1998, p. 103), and it is largely because of Lockhart's untrustworthiness that Hermione "has learned to doubt text, to question it and adapt it to her own means" (Friedman, 2009, p. 193). Her discernment with regard to textual authority applies to social authority as well, since she has also learned to balk when she perceives injustice or corruption behind the face of authority.

Hermione defies both textual and social authority in *OotP*, and her thirst for knowledge develops into a weapon that saves her and a number of her fellow students. Already distrustful of a Ministry of Magic that condemns Buckbeak and Sirius, refuses to warn citizens of the return of Voldemort, and threatens to expel Harry, Hermione deduces the reason for Dolores Umbridge's presence at Hogwarts before the new teacher even begins her speech. Hermione correctly interprets this speech and understands that "'the Ministry's interfering at Hogwarts'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 214). When she arrives in Umbridge's classroom, she realizes that the Ministry is also interfering with her education. Adney (2004) and Friedman (2009) emphasize that Umbridge's refusal to permit any practical application of or intellectual engagement with the textbook earns Hermione's enmity and fuels her insurgence. Jennifer Flaherty (2004) notes that "despite her inherent respect for authority, Hermione is one of the most rebellious students in the school when the freedom of knowledge is challenged" (p. 96). Hermione takes the initiative to ensure that her magical education continues appropriately and turns to the logical source for practical knowledge: Harry. In organizing an underground defense club in defiance of Umbridge's decree that expressly forbids it, Hermione distinguishes herself from the "brainy" but rule-bound Percy Weasley. Ron correctly assumes in *GoF* that Percy would not hesitate to abandon his family "'if he thought [they] were standing in the way of his career'" (Rowling, 2000, p. 534), and in *OotP*, Percy moves out of the Burrow, declaring that if his parents "'were going to become traitors to the Ministry he was going to make sure everyone knew he didn't belong to [their] family anymore'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 72). Percy, former Prefect, former Head Boy, and outstanding student with excellent exam results, uses his achievements to serve

a corrupt system, blinded by his ambition. Tom Riddle, former Prefect, former Head Boy, and brilliant student with top exam results, uses his achievements to serve his own ends, dehumanized by his ambition. Hermione, current Prefect, most likely candidate for Head Girl, and brilliant student with top exam results, uses her achievements to serve her friends, to "liberate herself and those she cares about" (Adney, 2004, p. 103), true to her ethic of care.

Hermione does not limit the defense club to her friends, however; she feels strongly that anyone who wants to learn should be allowed to join. Hermione, who "functions more consistently at [the level of principled rule-breaking], with fewer regressions, than any other character who is not an adult" (Whited & Grimes, 2002, p. 201), wants everyone to benefit from her education, as she has in previous books. When Michael Corner suggests that she wants to do well on her O.W. L. exam, she replies, "'Of course I do ... but I want more than that, I want to be properly trained in Defense because ... Lord Voldemort's back'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 340). She appreciates that far more is at stake than her personal success. Her scholarship is not pedantic—she exclaims that the D.A. is "'much more important than homework!'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 325)—but productive, practical, and freely shared. Her intelligence thus allows her to arm her classmates for survival against Voldemort, and it also ensures a measure of protection for the group. Her jinx against anyone who betrays the group is so powerful that Umbridge cannot find a remedy for it, and it halts Marietta Edgecombe's confession long enough to allow Dumbledore to take action. The Protean Charm that she uses on the fake Galleons creates a communication network in a school where all other avenues are unsafe. As Hermione explains her handiwork, the advanced nature of the magic inspires awe in the group: "'How come you're not in Ravenclaw?' [Terry Boot] demanded, staring at Hermione with something close to wonder. 'With brains like yours?'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 399). Hermione's intelligence is indeed formidable, but, like Harry, the Sorting Hat chose her for Gryffindor, recognizing the heroism that would be nurtured by her intelligence. Her cleverness also allows her to arm the wizarding community with vital information, for it is in *OotP* that Hermione's victory over Rita Skeeter comes to fruition. Having discovered Rita's secret through her acumen and investigation, Hermione holds power over the journalist and uses it to enlighten the wizarding community. As Dresang (2002) remarks, "Hermione is a prime example that information brings power" (p. 223), and she wants to empower as many others as she can in turn.

Hermione's intelligence develops to encompass a broader spectrum of insight, and her ability to "read" people grows in importance. She "is established as an authority, ... acting as the rational, balanced voice opposing Harry's anger, suggesting alternative understandings of people, relationships and facts" (Behr, 2005, pp. 117–18). She initially harbors some misgivings about forming the D.A. after her idea receives enthusiastic support from Sirius because she realizes that he wants to be active himself,

even if his actions are rash. Once she hears that Dumbledore knows about the Room of Requirement, however, she is relieved and "raise[s] no more objections" (Rowling, 2003, p. 388). "The presence of hundreds of books" (Rowling, 2003, p. 390) in the room itself confirms that she has made the right decision. As in *GoF*, we see Hermione put her trust in books and Dumbledore, and this will be critical in the final book of the series. Hermione tries unsuccessfully to convince Sirius to treat Kreacher kindly, but he does not heed her advice to the detriment of everyone in the Order, himself in particular. Hermione has more success with Harry, for he has begun to internalize her advice. When Dobby offers to show Harry the Room of Requirement in the middle of the night, he thinks better of his rash impulse to follow "when, not for the first time, a voice very much like Hermione's whispered in his ear: *reckless*" (Rowling, 2003, p. 387). Harry also suspects that "part of his mind—the part that often spoke in Hermione's voice—now felt guilty" (Rowling, 2003, p. 682) about his dreams since Dumbledore wants Harry to block the dreams out by using Occlumency, as Hermione reminds Harry again and again. In the end, Harry refuses to listen to Hermione's trust in Dumbledore and ignore the vision of Sirius under torture, he refuses to listen to her understanding of Harry's own character and accept that Voldemort is playing on Harry's propensity for saving others, and he refuses to listen to her logic and realize that Voldemort would not likely appear in the Ministry of Magic during working hours on a weekday. Harry puts Sirius in danger by rejecting Hermione's knowledge, and his mistake ultimately costs Sirius his life.

Hermione's intelligence plays a less prominent part in *H-BP*, as Andrade (2008) argues, because her "role diminishes when the series steers away from realism to re-center upon the fantasy hero's adventures" (p. 170), but we see her continue to excel at Hogwarts. She enjoys success in virtually all disciplines, including the wizarding equivalents of math and science: Arithmancy, Astronomy, and Potions. In all of these subjects, including Arithmancy, which is described as "'probably the toughest subject there is'" (Rowling, 2003, p. 716), Hermione earns a grade of Outstanding on her O.W.L. exam. When Harry rejects her theory that the Half-Blood Prince is a girl, she expresses outrage at the assumption that a girl would be incapable of brilliance in potions, a variation of the adage that science is not women's work. She accuses him of sexism ("'The truth is that you don't think a girl would have been clever enough'" [Rowling, 2005, p. 538]), but the obvious sincerity of Harry's response dismisses the specter of female intellectual inferiority as quickly as it surfaces: "'How can I have hung round with you for five years and not think girls are clever?' said Harry, stung by this" (Rowling, 2005, p. 538). Unlike our Muggle world, in which the former president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, stated "something about how 'innate differences' kept women from excelling like men in math and science" (Freedman, 2005, para. 1), girls achieve at least equal academic standing with boys in the Potterverse. As Janet Croft (2009) observes, "There seems to be no expectation that

girls will excel at some classes and not at others" (p. 135), over half of which, including Arithmancy and Astronomy, are taught by women.

Indeed, Hermione's success is not unique, as evidenced by the other girls enrolled in Advanced Potions in the film version and by the example of Lily Evans, who also earned the praise of her teachers. Harry's perfect Draught of Living Death prompts Slughorn to exclaim, "'It's clear you've inherited your mother's talent. She was a dab hand at Potions, Lily was!'" (Rowling, 2005, p. 191). He later remarks that Lily "'had the same intuitive grasp of potion-making'" (Rowling, 2005, p. 378) as the apparently gifted Harry. Rosemary Salomone (as cited in Croft, 2009) states that proponents of single-sex schooling for girls credit the system with "improving overall academic achievement; developing interest and competency in math, science, and technology; enhancing self-esteem; opening access to non-traditional careers; [and] providing leadership opportunities." Girls in co-educational institutions risk a decline in all of these areas as they enter adolescence, a time when "girls surrender, at least outwardly, to the culture's definition of who they should be and how they should act ... [in order] to maintain the relationships that are important to them" (Gruver, 2003, p. 103). Neither Lily Evans nor Hermione Granger loses her voice at Hogwarts, and neither one lacks for romantic interest or amical relationships. Lily does not hesitate to stand up to the popular James Potter as he bullies the disliked Severus Snape, and Hermione refuses to let Ron's casual slur about women being emotional and irrational pass unchallenged: "'I doubt you'd find a *woman* who sulked for half an hour because Madam Rosmerta didn't laugh at their joke about the hag, the Healer, and the *Mimbulus mimbletonia*'" (Rowling, 2005, p. 468). Gruver's (2003) observation of the potential loss to society when adolescent girls retreat into a silence of conformity is telling: "If [the cure for cancer] is in the brain of a girl who submerges her own dreams and knowledge, none of us (women or men) will benefit from her brilliance" (p. 111). The girls at Hogwarts, Hermione in particular, provide young readers with examples of girls who nurture their brilliance, and the narrative shows just how important that brilliance is to the world around them.

The final installment in the series, *DH*, brings Hermione's intelligence and scholarship back to the forefront as she plays an integral role in the final campaign against Voldemort. As the Trio wait for Harry to come of age so that they can begin their mission, we learn that Hermione had the foresight to procure all of Dumbledore's books about Horcruxes and has read them all. She therefore knows how a Horcrux is made, how it functions, what its powers are, and how to destroy it; without her research, Voldemort would remain invincible. She prepares what Ron calls a "'mobile library'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 95) of important reference works, including *Spellman's Syllabary* and *A History of Magic*, and procures other useful texts along the way, such as *The Life and Lies of Albus Dumbledore* and *Nature's Nobility: A Wizarding Genealogy*. Her

insight and understanding of house-elves succeeds in turning Kreacher into an essential ally; she makes the connection about Phineas Nigellus's portrait and uses it to acquire further guidance on destroying the Horcruxes; she conjures the flask to contain Snape's memories when Harry is incapable of thought or action; in the film version, the escape from Gringotts on the back of the dragon is entirely Hermione's idea. She recognizes the Erumpent Horn in Xenophilius Lovegood's house because she has read about them, and her quickly-devised plan to escape the Death Eaters surpasses even her improvised escape from Umbridge in *OotP*. True to her principles, Hermione is not content to save just her own life and those of Harry and Ron; she also deliberately allows Harry to be seen so that the Death Eaters will spare Xenophilius. Her brilliance is not lost upon the two boys: "'You're a genius,' Ron repeated, looking awed. 'Yeah, you are, Hermione,' agreed Harry fervently. 'I don't know what we'd do without you'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 425).

The significance of Hermione's intellectual gifts comes into sharpest relief as she works to uncover the truth about the Deathly Hallows. Dumbledore's bequest sets her on the path to enlightenment: "'To Miss Hermione Jean Granger, I leave my copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, in the hope that she will find it entertaining and *instructive*'" (Rowling, 2007, pp. 125–6, emphasis added). The object bequeathed, the book, underscores the importance of her studies, and the word "instructive" highlights her wits, her interaction with texts. She tells Rufus Scrimgeour, "'If the Ministry hasn't found any hidden codes in this book in thirty-one days, I doubt that I will'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 126), but she does indeed find a message there, outwitting all the Ministry officials who had already examined the book with painstaking care. Thanks to her knowledge of Ancient Runes, her careful study of the *Tales*, and her use of the syllabary, Hermione notices the symbol of the Deathly Hallows. She recognizes it again on Ignotus Peverell's grave, which leads to her investigation of the Peverells in the genealogy book, and once more in Dumbledore's letter to Grindelwald in the headmaster's biography. Her research thus leads her to pursue the lead by going to ask Xenophilius for more details about the Hallows. Convinced of her findings, she tells Harry, "'Dumbledore left me *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*.... A symbol that links Dumbledore, Grindelwald, and Godric's Hollow? Harry, I'm sure we ought to know about this!'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 395). She realizes that the Peverell coat of arms is the sign of the Hallows and reaches Harry's conclusion about the Resurrection Stone before he does.

While Harry becomes absorbed in "his belief in and longing for the Hallows" (Rowling, 2007, p. 435), Hermione reminds him repeatedly that his mission does not involve finding them. She tells him, "'Dumbledore left you very clear instructions: Find and destroy the Horcruxes! That symbol doesn't mean anything, forget the Deathly Hallows, we can't afford to get sidetracked'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 433). Both her logic and her trust in Dumbledore, which we have seen linked together in both *GoF* and

OotP, tell her to pursue the headmaster's plan, and we have seen the disastrous consequences of Harry's failure to listen to her. Ximena Gallardo-C. and C. Jason Smith (2009) remark that "the lesson of the tale—reject power, accept the inevitableness of death, and endeavor to have a quiet life—is what Dumbledore hopes Harry will learn in time for his battle with Voldemort, and it is why he bequeaths the storybook that contains the tale to Hermione" (p. 100). Dumbledore repays Hermione's faith in him by showing equal faith in her and the power of her intellectual gifts; he anticipates that, as an engaged reader, she will decipher the symbol, interpret the tale, and share her knowledge with Harry. The Dumbledore whom Harry meets after sacrificing himself confirms these intentions: "'I am afraid I counted on Miss Granger to slow you up, Harry. I was afraid that your hot head might dominate your good heart'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 720). In this conversation, Dumbledore indicates that Hermione, with her engaged scholarship and the "cool logic" that she displayed from the beginning of the series, had an explicit and critical role to play in saving the wizarding world.

Heilman and Donaldson (2009) declare that "the stereotypical, hackneyed, and sexist patterns" of the series as a whole "reflect rather than challenge the worst elements of patriarchy" (p. 140). However, Gallardo-C. and Smith (2003) present a more nuanced view of the texts, arguing that "while the novels do not actively critique gender stereotyping, the narrative does challenge standard constructions of gender and gender roles in several ways" (p. 191). For example, Harry "is non-violent, non-aggressive, emotional, caring, and vulnerable, which definitely makes him different from the conventional romantic heroes" (Nikolajeva, 2009, p. 231). An emotional hero undercuts the binary that privileges masculinity/mind/reason over femininity/body/emotion, a binary whose powerful heritage dates back to Classical and medieval authors such as Aristotle, Philo of Alexandria, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Isidore of Seville, Gratian, and Abelard. In tandem with the emotional hero, Rowling gives us a rational heroine in the character of Hermione. As she does in *OotP*, Hermione analyzes Harry's emotions as he learns of Dumbledore's past in *DH*, voicing her logic in an effort to calm him: "'Harry, I'm sorry, but I think the real reason you're so angry is that Dumbledore never told you any of this himself'" (Rowling, 2007, p. 361). Cherland's (2008–9) claim that "positioned against Hermione, Harry appears cool, calm, and capable of acting independently" (p. 278) does not adequately reflect the portrait of Hermione that emerges in the first book of the series and continues through the final volume, for the novels consistently associate Hermione with cool logic, while Harry is more often subject to hot-headedness. This is not to say that either character is entirely defined by "masculine" reason or by "feminine" emotion; rather, one finds both traits in both characters. Brown and St. Clair (2002) explain that Tamora Pierce, creator of Alanna, the empowered heroine of the young adult series *The Lioness Quartet*,

> stresses over and over again the need for girls to accept all aspects of their beings, those that have traditionally been viewed as masculine as well as traditionally feminine ones. She also stresses that the fully integrated self is necessary not only for individual happiness but also for that of society as a whole [p. 49].

Rowling's approach in depicting Hermione in the *Harry Potter* saga appears to have much in common with that of Pierce, for the magical world of Harry Potter would have been destroyed without the rational, nurturing, logical, sensitive Hermione.

This nuanced portrait of a girl with many recognizably "feminine" traits makes Hermione a strong role model for readers. While Kellner (2010) criticizes the depiction of "a sensitive and motherly" Hermione as "a capitulation to male chauvinist stereotypes" (p. 380), Gallardo-C. and Smith (2003) clarify that "stories for children and adolescents that most effectively address issues of gender do so not by creating adult-inspired utopias or dystopias, but by mirroring the child's real-world experiences in a slightly altered form" (p. 192). This perhaps explains why young readers of the series clearly see Hermione not as a stereotypically "weak" girl but as an example to emulate. The home page of the website *Hermione Granger's Wand*, for example, whose name bears the subtitle "We All Know Who the Real Hero(ine) Is in the Harry Potter Movies & Books," includes the following commentary accompanied by a reader's testimonial: "Finally, a girl who is not afraid to be smart and tough. Certainly a noble role model for any girl in today's world.... *I wish there were more girls I could look up to like Hermione Granger*—Susan Chapman—Age 12" (n.d.). In addition, Ernie Bond and Nancy Michelson have found that "strong female characters are another hallmark of much of the fan fiction created ... by adolescent females" (as cited in Adney, 2004, p. 103). It seems likely that fan fiction will continue to grow as it enters a new era with the recently announced website *Pottermore* (http://www.pottermore.com/). In the video posted on the site, J.K. Rowling tells visitors that "*Pottermore* will be built in part by you, the reader.... *Pottermore* will be the place where fans of any age can share, participate in, and rediscover the stories," perhaps giving an official voice to some of the work inspired by Hermione.

Throughout the series, Hermione demonstrates that she and her brainpower are essential to the salvation of those around her and the broader wizarding community. Andrade (2008) is quite right to assert that "Hermione continually interferes with Harry's position as the central male hero" (p. 176), and it is neither fair nor accurate to allege that by the end of the series, Hermione "has only exercised her gift to aid Harry's quests rather than focusing on her own career. He is the hero; she is but an assistant" (Heilman & Donaldson, 2009, p. 145). One might wonder what kind of career Hermione could possibly have had under Voldemort's regime as a Muggle-born witch, an enemy of the

Head of the Muggle-Born Registration Commission, and a close associate of Undesirable Number One. Her moral reasoning tells her that her own advancement must come after ensuring the survival of her world. Whenever it is a question of defeating Voldemort, Harry's quest must also be the quest of every witch and wizard who would not be murdered or enslaved by evil. Furthermore, Hermione hones her ability to multitask in her third year, suggesting that she can both aid Harry and work towards her own goals. J.K. Rowling revealed during a web chat that took place shortly after the release of *DH* that

> Hermione began her post–Hogwarts career at the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures where she was instrumental in greatly improving life for house-elves and their ilk. She then moved (despite her jibe to Scrimgeour) to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement where she was a progressive voice who ensured the eradication of oppressive, pro-pureblood laws [2007].

As Harry became the Head of the Auror Office, a subdivision of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Hermione ranks at least as high as Harry, if not higher. Her ability to multitask and her scholarship continue into her adult life as well, for in addition to fulfilling her duties in the Ministry, Hermione produces a brand-new translation of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* for publication and release to the wizarding (and Muggle) world (Rowling, 2008). The series clearly does not "[dismiss] the importance of teachers, classroom instruction, and intellectual engagement" (Birch, 2009, p. 118), for we see time and again just how important Hermione's schoolwork and intellectual curiosity are to the Potterverse. In her easy acceptance of her own abilities, Hermione serves as a powerful model for young (and not-so-young) readers of both genders. She shows that smart girls can succeed, fit in, stay true to themselves, and save the world.

Notes

1. "Reasoning whose basis is the individual welfare of friends and loved ones" is an example of stage three reasoning in the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, the psychologist whose research serves as the point of reference for Whited and Grimes's analysis, whereas "reasoning based on the concept of justice for all society" (pp. 191–2) is an example of stage four reasoning. Unlike his colleague Carol Gilligan, who thought that stage three reasoning better characterized female moral development, Kohlberg privileged the stage four "ethic of justice" as superior to the stage three "ethic of care"

(Whited & Grimes, 2002, p. 191). See “I’m Hoping to Do Some Good in the World” for more.

2. Dresang feels that Hermione is only moving toward equal footing with Harry and Ron at this point, but in my reading, she has already established it. Given that, as Farah Mendlesohn (2002) suggests, Ron’s principal qualities are being “faithful and dogged” whereas Hermione’s are being “redoubtable and brilliant”(p. 164), and given Hermione’s actions, one can readily argue that Hermione contributes as much to the defeat of Voldemort as Harry and rather more than Ron.

3. See From Teenage Witch to Social Activist for more.

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How to Do Things with Magic Words

The Scandal of the Spell-Casting Body

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> *To speak an act: can this be done? Is it possible to speak seduction—the always scandalous intervention of love in theory, of pleasure in knowledge?*
> —Shoshana Felman, The Scandal of the Speaking Body
>
> *Harry turned to Hermione. "Do something," he said desperately.*—J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Language, in *Harry Potter*, carries tremendous power. Passwords function as keys to secret portals. Smoldering envelopes contain audible, disembodied voices that shout furious messages at their recipients. Series villain Lord Voldemort, like certain religious gods, goes by the monikers "He Who Shall Not Be Named" (to his supporters) and "You-Know-Who" (to his detractors), so sacred are spoken utterances to inhabitants of the magical world of *Harry Potter*. As witches and wizards, spells and enchantments are the lifeblood of their communities. Indeed, we may consider Hogwarts Academy of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where young magical people receive their training and where much of the series is set, a school devoted to teaching pupils how to do things with words.

How to do things with words? Speech act theory, formulated by philosopher and linguist J.L. Austin, argues that certain types of language have the power to enact certain types of events. His classic examples of performative speech include saying "I do" at a marriage ceremony, "I bet" at a race track, and "I bequeath," in a will, scenarios which illustrate that language can do more than merely describe events; language itself may enact events (Austin 1962). It may, in the words of Harry Potter which constitute the epigraph to this essay, *do something*.

Inspired by Shoshana Felman's playful reading of Austin through the lens of Molière's fictional character Don Juan, which Felman uses to critique the seductive power of promising (Felman 2002), I propose a reading of Austin through Hermione Granger, heroine of the *Harry Potter* series. For Austin, performative speech results in necessarily worldly consequences. Even (or especially) the performative statement "I bequeath" illustrates the power of words to enact earthly events. Although "I bequeath" is about as close as Austin gets to approaching the use of speech in a mystical realm,

this essay uses Austin as a point of departure to investigate what explicitly magical speech reveals about the performative power of words, as well as the agency of those who utter them.

What might Muggle-born Hermione's role as star pupil of Hogwarts, in particular her precociousness in casting spells, suggest about the utility of language in social advancement? Ruth Bottigheimer (1986) has persuasively argued that in traditional European folktales, witches are among the few female archetypes consistently granted the power of speech, while their heroine counterparts cultivate silence. How might Hermione's mastery of both verbal and nonverbal spells unify the divergent tropes of her folkloric forbearers? In this essay, we will examine historic tensions which Hermione' s spells ameliorate as well as new tensions which they produce. What ruptures in our understanding of speech and power might spell-casting create?

The Literary Speech Act

While it at first may seem strange to consider Hermione Granger, a fictional millennial teenage witch and adolescent pop cultural icon, through the lens of J.L. Austin, mid-century Oxford philosopher of language, part of the pleasure of our examination comes from the dryly whimsical sensibility shared by Austin and Rowling as they engage in nonce-formation, the creation of new words for specific purposes. Compare for example, the Latin-inspired magical vocabulary of the Potterverse, with its memory-aiding *remembralls* and insanity-causing *dementors*, to the playfulness with which Austin likewise invents familiar sounding words to suit his needs. His five categories of performative speech, which include *verdictives* (speech that issues a judgment), *exercitives* (speech that exercises power), *comissives* (speech that makes a promise), *behabitives* (speech that indulges reaction), and *expositives* (speech that clarifies communication), would perhaps not seem terribly out of place inside a spellbook at Hogwarts.

Austin introduced speech act theory to ameliorate what he saw as an error in the way that philosophy, as a discipline, approached language. Philosophy should not, Austin argued, conceive of language as mere descriptions of events, which can be interpreted as either true or false. While he concedes that at times language describes events—statements which Austin terms *constatives*—in other situations, language itself performs the very act of which it speaks. Parsing this type of speech—the *performatives* described above—forms the basis of Austin's seminal lecture series, published in 1962 under the title *How To Do Things With Words*.

Shoshana Felman's 1980 investigation of Austin, republished in 2002 under the title *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*, focuses on *comissives*, Austin's third category of performative speech, as exemplified in the literary characterization of Don Juan, seducer and playboy of French Classical theater. Felman reads Don Juan's perpetually failing promises and the consequences they provoke as literary examples of Austin's philosophical theories. Don Juan uses his words to achieve what he wants—that is, he masters the art of seduction—indicating the utility of language in producing real world consequences. However, the failure of his promises is not a result of failed language. Rather, Don Juan's failed promises arise as a result of his own failure to, as the saying goes, keep his word. As read by Felman, Don Juan demonstrates the body's existence in excess of its performative speech. Therein lies the scandal of speaking.

As Felman's book suggests, speech act theory has had far reaching implications in disciplines beyond philosophy, including literature, psychology, performance studies and legal studies, as well as women's and gender studies. Following Austin's model, Judith Butler and others have argued that gender, much like language, may not be merely true or false, but rather, again like language, gender performs (Butler 1990). Understanding gender as a performative social construct (as opposed to sex as a biological fact) therefore stakes its rhetorical lineage as well as its emphasis on performativity in Austin's theory of speech acts. Because we are here concerned with using speech act theory to conduct a feminist investigation of a literary character, such gendered speech act implications should not go unnoted. When it comes to Hermione, however, I am more concerned with the relation of speech acts to the feminist notion of agency.

Agency, the capacity to think and act independently, and on ones own behalf, is a complicated matrix of the *Harry Potter* books. Voldemort's rise to power is, in a sense, a struggle for him to reclaim his agency, lost after his preliminary failed attempt to murder Harry, which prefigures their battles to come. Recall that in the first *Harry Potter* book, Voldemort is discovered to be living inside the skull of a Hogwarts teacher, dependent on another's body (Rowling 1997); it is not until the end of the fourth book that Voldemort regains a body of his own (Rowling 2000). Once re-embodied, Voldemort seeks power both intersubjectively, by gaining followers to do his bidding, and personally, by seeking ever more powerful magic. To what extent might we read agency, in the Potterverse, as skillful use of magic? In the series, students enter Hogwarts on the brink of adolescence, some having just learned of their magical powers, and as per the conventions of coming of age literature, are meant to graduate knowing how to properly wield their power.

In her analysis of speech, gender, and power in the tales of the Brothers Grimm, Bottigheimer (1986) writes of the utility of analyzing which characters, in traditional

fairytales, utilize magic. Her study asks us to examine "speech at its most powerful: its use in casting spells" and argues that "how and in what associations these powers are distributed is a litmus test for otherwise invisible assumptions [about gender] in the *Fairy Tales*" (p. 118). How might spell-casting in *Harry Potter* similarly reveal the gendered dynamic at work in the novels? To glean answers, we must turn to the education of Hermione, with an eye toward her mastery of the magical speech act.

The Miseducation of Hermione Granger

The *Harry Potter* series is remarkably well crafted, with events of the first novel anticipating the plots of the subsequent six. Thus, in the first book, our young heroes mistake potions teacher Snape for the novel's bad guy, only to be surprised by a plot twist which teaches them things are not always as they seem, a turn of events which establishes Snape's trajectory over the course of the series. Much as, when older, Harry and company mistakenly accept what seems obvious (Snape killing Dumbledore as proof of Snape's treachery, Rowling 2007) the younger trio of Harry, Ron, and Hermione do so as well (Snape mocking Harry as proof that Snape wants to murder Harry, Rowling 1997). Because the novels are meant for readers who grow older along with the series, Rowling presents both sets of conclusions as plausible to the intended demographic of their readerships. It is important, therefore, for her to introduce Snape not only as a mean teacher, but as a mean teacher who bears a specific grudge against Harry.

When Harry and his classmates assemble for their first class with Snape, therefore, Rowling (1997) immediately establishes Snape as Harry's potential archrival by having him quiz Harry in front of his cohort on the first day of class with a set of advanced questions to which Harry does not know the answer. That the entire time Snape addresses Harry, Hermione continues to shoot her hand into the air, begging to be called on, reads as a comedic device which establishes Hermione as a smarty-pants. We can glean from later revelations about Snape's rivalry with Harry's father that by taunting Harry on the first day of class, Snape intends, however mirthfully, to teach Harry humility. But what does such a stunt teach Hermione?

Bottigheimer argues that the Brothers Grimm made use of the nineteenth century German belief that women should be quiet by publishing fairytales in which "good" female characters are disciplined into silence. Writes Bottigheimer (1988), "Cinderella [speechlessly] endures the barbs and jibes of her loquacious step-sisters. Their very loquacity identifies them as wicked. In the world of Wilhelm Grimm, a talkative woman meant trouble" (p. 124–125). The world of J.K. Rowling however, is twenty-first

century England, and Hermione's eagerness to speak up in class marks a shift from a prior generation, in which schoolgirls worried about speaking up in class, for fear of seeming unfeminine. Whereas the Grimm's heroines' muteness marks them as embodiments of nineteenth century German misogyny, Hermione's first interaction with Snape (a character perpetually dwelling on the classroom dynamics of a prior generation), bespeaks a generation of young women uncertain how to identify or respond to slights from figures of authority that convey historic gendered prejudice.

Just as the Grimm heroines learn and model silence for the Grimm readership, we may read Hermione's trajectory throughout the first novel, and perhaps throughout the series, through the lens of her response to Snape's early refusal to permit her to speak. It is worth noting, for example, that the scene is repeated, with escalated urgency, two books later: when Hermione tries to convince Snape to hear out the wrongly convicted prisoner Sirius Black (this time using her own voice to permit others a voice as well, another series-long arc for Hermione), Snape again screams at her that she is a stupid girl who should be quiet (Rowling 1999). Unlike the Grimm's heroines, whose silence is virtuous, Rowling makes Hermione's silencing an unfair burden, one that hurts others as well as Hermione herself.

Within the first novel, however, Snape's silencing of Hermione is inverted partway through the book, when Hermione, upset with Harry and Ron for convincing her to sneak out of their dormitory and getting her (again) in trouble, responds by giving them the silent treatment (Rowling 1997). Like the heroines of fairytales from two centuries ago, Hermione is reprimanded for her attempt at jubilant speech. Rather than respond by adopting a womanly repose, however, Rowling has Hermione learn to wield her silence as weapon. This trope too is repeated throughout the series, particularly in the final book, when Hermione uses highly advanced spells to protect the trio during their life on the lam, even as, when furious with Ron over his temporary desertion, she gives him the silent treatment (Rowling 2007). This characterization of Hermione thus winks at the traditional fairytale role of the silent heroine, even as it moves beyond it, toward dimensions of heroism in which Hermione, by speaking, repeatedly frees herself as well as Harry and Ron from trouble.

Hermione's friendship with Harry and Ron is solidified in the first book, when the boys set out to rescue her from a giant troll. Despite the plot's framework, what ensues is no conventional damsel in distress rescue mission. When Ron knocks out the troll by using magic to levitate a club, he does so using the very spell which Hermione had tried to teach him earlier that day. That is, Ron saves her, but he does so using her own words. We might therefore read the scene as Hermione's intersubjective victory, where her skill at spell-casting prompts her rescue via a friend who owes his own skill to her. Further, when the boys are caught with the troll by their professors, and about to receive

disciplinary action, Hermione speaks up before the boys can accept the punishment,[1] and lies on their behalf. Her second speech act, keeping the boys out trouble with the school, thus doubles the success her spell, incanted by Ron, which keep them out of trouble with the troll.

Rowling, however, is not content to permit Hermione intersubjective magical victories only. In the same novel's climactic battle, when a magical plant captures Ron and Harry, Hermione casts a spell to free the boys, a more direct inversion of the damsel in distress motif, and one that specifically invokes speech. The feat runs counter to conventional Grimm tales *The Twelve Brothers* and *The Six Swans*, each of which features a female protagonists whose brothers' salvation rely on her maintaining years-long vows of silence (Bottigheimer 1986). Keeping Bottigheimer's critique in mind, we can therefore read Hermione's early speech as an intervention in traditional folkloric female roles, where, in place of women's silence, female speech permits Hermione to release Ron and Harry, her brother-figures, from danger. Further, she does so using magical speech, a skill traditionally ascribed to witches, a powerful folkloric character type.

The Magical Speech Act

Magic in *Harry Potter* is not an abstract concept. Hogwarts students study its many facets with as much technical specificity as their Muggle counterparts would chemistry or physics. Indeed, the series' climactic victory over Voldemort depends heavily on a complicated set of properties regulating the mystical ownership of magic wands. Rowling is less explicit about the particularities of incantations, though throughout the first six books, in classes at Hogwarts, students learn to master spells of increasing difficulty. As the first potions class with Snape establishes, no student in the series learns magic with as much precocity as Hermione. To understand the linguistic power of her ability, we need to investigate the parallels between speech act theory and what we may here term the magical speech act.

When Austin rejects truth and falsity as useful values through which to consider speech, he proposes an alternate dichotomy: felicity and infelicity. Felicitous speech occurs when an act is performed as it is intended. For example, in a marriage ceremony, if a bride and groom say, "I do," and a priest pronounces them married, the act constitutes felicitous speech if, and only if, it meets several requirements. There are many opportunities for something to go wrong, which Austin illustrates with a series of absurd examples (what if the person officiating the marriage is not really empowered to officiate a marriage; what if one member of the happy couple is a monkey, Austin 1962).

We may consider spell-casting performative in the sense that spells are indeed linguistic performances which bring about real world transformations. Although Austin is intentionally focused on real world scenarios rather than mystical (or even fictional) ones, his rules of felicitous performative speech apply uncannily well to magical incantations (at least as presented in *Harry Potter*). Austin (1962) begins:

> (A1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances [p. 14].

Consider, by way of comparison, the following exchange, between Ron and Hermione, during a class session in which students are asked to levitate objects in *SS* (Rowling 1997), the scene which precipitates their encounter with the troll.

> "*Wingardium Leviosa*!" he shouted, waving his arms like a windmill.
> "You're saying it wrong," Harry heard Hermione snap. "It's Wing-*gar*-dium Levi-*o*-sa, make the 'gar' nice and long" [p. 171].

As per Austin's instructions, for the spell to work (for the performative to be felicitous) the spell must be said correctly (the uttering of certain words), by a witch or a wizard (by certain persons), holding a magic wand properly (under certain circumstances). Austin (1962) further clarifies:

> (A. 2) The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked [p. 15].

In the Potterverse, we may interpret this rule to mean that spells must be spoken by wizards (if a nonmagical person makes a stab at a spell, nothing will happen; "I've never so much as Transfigured a teabag," says the nonmagical Mrs. Figg, Rowling 2003, p. 21) with the materials needed present (*Wingardium Leviosa* will only work if there is an object present to be levitated.)

According to Austin (1962) the next properties of performative speech hold that:

> (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
>
> (B. 2) completely [p. 15].

Curiously, partnered spells do not figure prominently into the *Harry Potter* series, so B. 1 is not particularly relevant to magical speech in the Potterverse.[2] The object of a spell, however, whether a person or an inanimate object, must be appropriate to the spell in question. For example, a giant spider which Harry encounters as part of the Tri-

Wizard Tournament in the fourth book requires both Harry and Cedric Diggery incanting the Stupefy spell to simultaneously subdue it, as, when issued jointly, the spell doubles in intensity. One spell alone, the boys discover, is inappropriate for use on the giant spider (Rowling 2000). Similarly, B. 2's insistence that felicitous speech requires the full completion of the speech act is most certainly true of spells; an unfinished spell will not produce the intended result.

Austin's third and final set of requirements for a felicitous speech act is his most verbose, and perhaps, murkiest, as it addresses intent (1962). We will condense these last points as:

> (Γ. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings ... then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings ... and further
>
> (Γ. 1) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently [p. 15].

The question of intent—say, issuing a proposal of marriage, or a declaration of love—as it applies to speech acts is examined at length in Felman's critique of Don Juan and the scandal of promises. For Austin, indeed for speech act theory generally, questions of intent, and subsequent conduct, constitutes perhaps the most complicated component of felicitous performatives, because feeling on the part of the speaker may be difficult to judge. In spell-casting, however, there is no such room for ambiguity.

> Never used an Unforgivable Curse, have you boy? ... You need to *mean* them, Potter! You need to really want to cause pain—to enjoy it [p. 810].

When villainous Bellatrix Lestrange mocks Harry's unskillful use of the curse *crucio*, a forbidden curse meant to cause unendurable pain (Rowling 2003), what she tells him is perhaps true of spell-casting in the Potterverse generally. This third element of performative speech, as it applies to spell-casting in the Potterverse, acts as an elusive alchemy of intent and desire which determines a spell's success.

With a magical speech act, we need not debate its felicitousness, because the results are readily apparent. In a felicitous Wingardium Leviosa, an object levitates; a felicitous Crucio, a body writhes in pain. Indeed, part of the pleasure of interpreting power structures of *Harry Potter* according to speech act theory is that spells leave little room for ambiguity. Still, for Austin, as for Rowling, more interesting than felicitous performative speech is its unhappy counterpart. On what grounds do infelicitous speech acts fail? In a Hogwarts spellbook, Austin's pontifications on infelicitous speech might read something like a troubleshooting guide.

Misfires and Abuses

Austin deploys self-effacingly arch language to describe the differences between felicitous and infelicitous speech. After setting forth rules A, B, and (, Austin informs us that "if we sin against any one (or more) of these six rules, our performative utterances will be (in one way or another) unhappy" (Austin 1962, p. 15). In typical Austinion style, the word "sin" is at once absurd and serious. Even as his language suggests a joke, it is evident that Austin fervently believes these rules govern human action. His primary example of infelicitous speech is dynamic:

> If, say, we are not in a position to do the act, because we are, say, already married, or it is the purser and not the captain who is conducting the ceremony, then it is the that the act in question, e.g. marrying, is not successfully performed at all [p. 16].

The suggestion of a potentially bigamous couple marrying aboard a ship but mistaking the purser for the captain is amusing, however when Austin delivered his lectures at Harvard in 1955, and still when they were published in 1962, anti-miscegenation laws were in place in states around the U.S.Rules governing who is allowed to marry whom were not always the stuff of hypothetical amusement. Indeed, one of the most clear cut contemporary examples of debate surrounding felicitous speech exists in the current debate over same sex marriage. In Austinian terms, the marriage debate is a debate over the rules of felicitous performance: who has the ability to participate in marriage vows? Who has the authority to deem such vows felicitous?

Returning to Austin's division of failed speech acts into the categories of "misfires" and "abuses," then, we can look to same sex marriage debates for concrete examples of infelicitous speech's twin sides. In 2008, when the state of California voted to make same sex marriages illegal, the state was tasked with judging the legality of marriages performed during the brief spate of months when such marriages were permitted. Proposition 8 rendered gay marriage in California infelicitous: same sex couples could no longer, as Austin puts it, "seriously" recite marriage vows. Those who supported nullifying existing marriages viewed them as misfires, in violation of Austin's rule A.2: the particular persons were inappropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked, and therefore the procedure had misfired. Such marriages, that perspective held, were therefore void. In contrast, without an opportunity to argue the marriages as happy on their own terms, supporters of upholding the marriages could only argue them as abuses; though currently deemed infelicitous, the acts were nonetheless achieved and so retained validity.[3]

We see, therefore, that the tension between misfires and abuses is not limited to the concerns of philosophers and fantasy writers. In life, determining the difference between a misfire and an abuse can be difficult; the California controversy required judicial arbitration. The utility of examining speech acts in the realm of magical spells, as Bottigheimer's work on female characters in the Grimms suggests, lies in the fact that spell-casting is straightforward: the incantation either achieves its intended act, or it fails to do so. The *Harry Potter* series thus acts as a crucible in which we may test the implications of misfires and abuses. When Austin introduces the terms (1962), he begs that we, "not stress the normal connotations of these names!" (p. 16) But what might happen if we do?

A *misfire* is precisely what happens when a spell goes awry. In a stunningly literal actualization of speech act theory, an improper incantation literally results in a magic wand misfiring. Hogwarts students, for example, are told cautionary tales of a wizard who mispronounced a spell ("found himself on the floor with a buffalo on his chest," Rowling 1997, p. 171) and a witch who attempted to hex off her acne ("Madam Pomfrey fixed her nose back on in the end," Rowling 2000, p. 195.)[4] A faulty magic wand, on the other hand, will similarly fail to produce the requisite conditions for a felicitous performative. When Ron attempts to hex Draco Malfoy, in retaliation for Draco's referring to Hermione as a Mudblood, his damaged wand not only causes the spell to *misfire*, but *backfire*, (Rowling 1999).He mistakenly hexes himself.

"Mublood," itself a provocative word in the Potterverse, akin to a racial or ethnic slur, refers to magical people born to nonmagical families. Draco's lobbing the word at Hermione, in the second Harry Potter book, introduces the existence of bloodline hierarchies in the magical realm, a theme that will grow into a primary source of conflict as the series progresses. The *CoS* scene with Draco, however, is the first suggestion the series provides that Hermione will have a second class status to some in the wizarding world, despite her magical skill.[5] Significantly, Hermione's spells rarely, if ever, misfire.

Just as misfire is a remarkably apt descriptor of spells gone awry, so too is what Austin terms abusive speech literally realized by the spells of *Harry Potter*. Although the aforementioned Unforgivable Curses, above all other spells, are considered abuses of power, in Austinian terms, two of the three Unforgivable Curses do not constitute abusive speech acts, which Austin tells us occur when the intended act is "professed but hollow" (Austin 1962, p. 17). On the contrary, these acts perhaps more than any other require specific intent coupled with power. As Bellatrix Lestrange tells Harry, after his cry of "Crucio" fails to cause the spell's intended unbearable pain, Unforgivable Curses require that spell-casters "mean them" (Rowling 2003). Indeed, when the Harry Potter cohort is first taught about Unforgivable Curses, their teacher Mad-Eye Moody[6] tells

them that Avada Kadavra, also known as the killing curse, "needs a powerful bit of magic behind it" (Rowling 2000, p. 217), and that merely pointing their wands at him and saying the words would likely have no impact.

The remaining Unforgivable Curse, however, neatly binds the abusive use of magic to Austin's notion of abusive performative speech: the Imperius curse gives the spell-caster total control over the subject. Moody tells his class that, after the fall of Lord Voldemort, the Ministry of Magic had a difficult time determining the culpability of Voldemort's supporters, because many of them claimed to be under the Imperius curse. When Moody, as an illustration of the spell, places Harry under the Imperius curse, Harry finds "every thought and worry in his head ... wiped gently away, leaving nothing but a vague, untraceable happiness" (Rowling 2000, p. 231). We may interpret the Imperius curse as yet another example of intersubjectivity in magic: rather than carry out an act of one's own accord, the spell caster does so through the use of another. The person Imperiused into performing an act, however, does so in perfect accord with Austin's notion of abusive speech acts. An Imperiused person carries out acts without having "the requisite feelings ... the requisite thoughts ... [or] the requisite intentions" (Austin 1962, p. 40). While the act is achieved, therefore, it is nonetheless, in Austin's words, an unhappy one.

Significantly, the only major, continual interaction which the *Harry Potter* characters have with an Imperiused character is Madam Rosmerta, a barkeeper who falls under the control of Draco Malfoy (Rowling 2005). From a feminist perspective, we might consider the curse an example of unjust gendered power structures, in which a wealthy teenage boy usurps the agency of a grown, working class woman. Intersubjectivity, however, offers us a reparative reading. Traditionally, intersubjective power, or power achieved through another person, is an attribute that aligns with the limitations placed on women's agency (Žižek 1998). The old adage that behind every man there is a great woman holds that men cannot achieve success without invisible female support structures. It also, however, suggests that woman may achieve prominence, albeit inter-subjectively, through their relationships with powerful men. In that sense, the Imperius curse which Draco places on Madam Rosmerta is an inversion of traditional gendered power roles, even as it demonstrates how spell-casting can constitute an infelicitous performative despite the efficacy of the spell.

While Draco achieves magical power inter-subjectively, his classmate Hermione masters spell-casting, and reaps the rewards, in her own right. With an understanding of the intersections of performative speech acts and magical speech acts, we can now examine the specificities of Hermione's performative power.

Exercitives

Having demonstrated that magical speech functions as performative speech, let us at last return to Austin's categorical division of performatives, with an eye toward the types of speech most common to magical speech generally, as well as to Hermione particularly. Much as Don Juan, master of the art of seduction, sheds light for Felman on Austin's *commissive* category of performative speech with his multiple, often conflicting promises, so too does Hermione's skill at casting spells illuminate *exercitives*, Austin's second category of performative speech.

Exercitives, writes Austin (1962), are related to the *verdictive* category of performative speech, yet distinct from it. Unlike a *verdictive*, which merely issues judgement of how something is, an *exercitive* "is a decision that something *is to be so* [emphasis added] ... its consequences may be that others are 'compelled' or 'allowed' or 'not allowed' to do certain acts" (p. 155). Similarly, whereas a *commissive* renders promises based on a sense of futurity, *exercitives* alter present reality. By assessing how something *ought* to be, and then immediately making it so, *exercitive* speech most closely resembles spell-casting. Much of Hermione's skill at spell-casting, which so often saves Harry and Ron (indeed, saves the world!) comes from her sheer ability to perform a wide array of spells coupled with her knowledge of which spell is appropriate for which moment.

Consider, for example, the epigraph to this essay, which comes near the climactic battle of *SS*. As our titular hero approaches what will be the first of several harrowing encounters with archrival Lord Voldemort, Harry encounters an obstacle: his classmate Neville won't let him sneak out of their dormitory. When he turns to Hermione, imploring her to *do something* (Rowling 1997, original emphasis), Hermione responds by casting a spell that renders Neville immobile. That is, she both determines how the situation needs change (they need to get through, to save the world) and then, using a speech act, realizes the necessary ideal. After Hermione's spell, Rowling (1997) writes "Neville's arms snapped to his sides. His legs sprang together. His whole body went rigid ... only his eyes were moving, looking at them in horror" (p. 273). In Austin's words, Neville is "'not allowed' to do certain acts" (p. 155), in this case, to move, which permits Harry and company to pass by and save the day.

Hermione's immobilization of Neville sees its inverse four books later, when Hermione alone notice's Neville's horror at Moody's demonstration of the Cruciatus curse. Neville's reaction to witnessing the curse performed on a spider is remarkably reminiscent of the impact Hermione's body-binding spell has on him. Upon witnessing the curse, Neville clenches up, "his knuckles white, his eyes wide and horrified," (Rowling 2000, p. 215). This time, Hermione speaks up in Neville's defense, and she brings the same clarity and conviction to her mundane command as she does her magical

incantations ("'Stop it!' Hermione said shrilly," Rowling 2000, p. 214). Her imperative statement doubles as a felicitous Austinian *exercitive*; Moody stops torturing the spider in an effort to calm Neville.

Hermione's endeavors to use her powers to emancipate others (house elves, Muggles, Muggle-born witches and wizards, goblins—in other words, anyone disenfranchised)– further Rowling's inversion of Brothers Grimm female heroics, which requires female heroines to act as saviors through their silence. At the same time, Rowling honors that tradition, too, by making silent spell-casting a higher, more difficult level of magic than spoken incantations; only upper level Hogwarts students practice silent spells. In the final Harry Potter book, Hermione demonstrates her mastery of silent spell-casting in crucial moments, as when the trio embarks on a quest which requires them to live as fugitives, and she silently puts protective charms around their campsites. More urgently, when they are caught, she quickly and silently places Harry under a bee sting Hex, to swell his face in an attempt to disguise him (Rowling 2007).

The numerous instances of Hermione's invoking precisely the right spell in dire moments are perhaps best exemplified by a rainy quidditch match in which Harry's glasses become foggy, preventing him from seeing clearly. Watching the magical athletic sport from the stands, Hermione runs onto the field, takes Harry's glasses, and taps them with her wand, uttering "Impervious!" to make them repel water (Rowling 1999). The quidditch match, though dearly important to the Hogwarts students, perhaps lacks the weighty import of Hermione's skillful use of magic in explicitly life and death situations. Her quick thinking and prodigious skill during the rainy match, however, serves as a nice summation of her use of magic throughout the series: she protects Harry so that he can lead his team to victory. In addition to the act's suggestion that Hermione's articulation of magic helps Harry to see more clearly, her timely protective charm shifts the odds of success in his favor and helps him draw strength from his vulnerabilities. Throughout the series, her powerful felicitous *exercitives* have similar effects.

The Scandal of the Spell-Casting Body

Thus far, we have investigated Hermione's skill at what Austin terms locutionary acts, or performative statements with direct intentions, and therefore, explicit intended results (as when Hermione yells "Stop it!" to get Moody to stop the cruciatus curse). It is worth noting, however, that Hermione is also skilled at illocutionary speech acts, a category that commonly includes acts described by the statement "'I got him to do it by stating x" (Austin 1962, p. 118). Examples of Hermione's felicitous illocutionary acts include her

asking a talented quidditch player on a date in order to make Ron experience jealousy (Rowling 2003) and flattering Professor Lockhorn into giving the trio permission to use the restricted section of the library (Rowling 1999). Interestingly, a similar scene plays out between Lord Voldemort, who, as the boy Tom Riddle, successfully persuades Professor Slughorn to teach him secrets of dark magic, via flattery and obfuscation (Rowling 2005).

While it might be tempting to consider such speech acts scandalous—after all, interlocutionary acts have hidden agendas—by the end of the *Harry Potter* series, Hermione's use of magical speech becomes far more scandalous in the eyes of the controlling powers of the wizarding establishment than any interlocutionary speech act she might utter. After Voldemort's supporters take over the Ministry of Magic, witches and wizards born to Muggle families are incarcerated for the crime of "stealing" magic (Rowling 2007); misdirection and theft (such as sneakily looking at library books meant only for certain eyes), constitute expected behavior. In contrast, Hermione's actual magical skill runs counter to the narrative supported by the Death Eaters: that only "pureblood" wizards can properly wield magic. Indeed, even those unsupportive of Death Eaters sometimes hold hierarchical expectations of magical ability based on bloodlines. Professor Slughorn, for example, teases Harry that he "couldn't believe it" when he learned Harry's mother, his prized pupil, was Muggle-born ("Thought she must have been pure-blood, she was so good.... Funny how that happens sometimes") (Rowling 2005, p. 22). As the top student in her own Hogwarts class, Muggle-born Hermione's skillful use of magic therefore constitutes a scandal in its own right.

The scandal of the spell-casting body, which is to say, a body that practices felicitous *exercitives*, lies not merely in the body's ability to make words do things, but in that the wielder may be anybody. Any body: Hermione's skill at magic is unexpected. It upends longstanding assumptions about power dynamics in the wizarding world. Whether such beliefs are professed jocularly (as by Slughorn), unwittingly (as by Snape), or with missionary, political zeal (as by the Death Eaters), such notions are undone by Hermione's magical speech acts. Indeed, one might read Hermione's teachers' limited expectations of her as an allegory relating to the expectations for women held by men of different generations (Slughorn is old enough to be Hermione's grandfather; Snape her father). Yet magical ability, in *Harry Potter*, is not a simple allegory, just as magical skill is explicitly not bound by gender or genealogy. Hermione's rich characterization triangulates the disjunctures of female speech, which Bottigheimer finds in the Grimms, with Austin's supposition that words do things. Recalling that, in *Harry Potter*, magical ability constitutes a form of agency, Hermione's magical skill demonstrates for Rowling's millennial readership how a young girl without a lineage of power can nonetheless learn to wield it, herself.

We can marvel that Rowling's magical speech aligns remarkably well with Austin's speech act theory—but perhaps the parallels are still more marvelous in the other direction. Although Austin is explicitly concerned only with real world interactions, not fictional statements and certainly not enchantments, the very fact that words can do things is itself a form of magic. When viewed through the lens of Hermione, *exercitive* speech reveals speech acts as near-magical processes through which imagined worlds come into being. As an *exercitive* performative, a spell permits its caster to realize ideals that she deems appropriate and desirable. When Hermione saves the world, the world which she saves is one of her own making.

Notes

1. The British edition of the first book, titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), explicitly draws attention to Hermione's speech act by noting: "it was Hermione who spoke first," (p. 192). Curiously, the American edition omits that line.

2. An investigation of spells in *Harry Potter* published on SemanticsArchive.net posits that the biggest difference between magical speech acts and nonmagical speech acts is that mundane speech acts "work by affecting a mind that understands what has been said whereas spell targets may be uncomprehending inanimate objects" (Diesing and McConnell-Ginet, 2010).

3. The language Austin uses to describe a marriage that misfires uncannily anticipates language surrounding the present day marriage controversy. "When the utterance is a misfire ... and our act (marrying, etc.) is void or without effect ... we use such an expression as 'went through form of marriage' by contrast with 'married'" (p. 16).

4. A more thorough account of Austinian misfires as applied to spell-casting might more fully investigate the magical realizations of his misfire subcategories, including *misinvocations, misexecutions, misapplications, flaws*, and *hitches*. Mispronouncing a spell that mistakenly produces a buffalo, for example, is an instance of misinvocation; what the acne-plagued young witch did to hex off her nose, we are not told.

5. When, in the final book, Hermione declares herself "a Mudblood, and proud of it!" (Rowling 2007, p. 489) she plays into a long tradition of minority groups performatively reclaiming slurs used against them (Butler 1997).

6. Technically, this instructor is not the Auror Mad-Eye Moody but an imposter, and a Death Eater, Barty Crouch. Our young heroes, however, don't yet know it.

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Hermione as Warrior

Hermione Granger Goes to War

A Feminist Reflection on Girls in Conflict

HELEN BERENTS

One important aim of feminist theory is to uncover the locations where girls and women act beyond or outside their traditional roles, and to bring attention to the margins of our society where women's work and activities are often located. In our increasingly global society, those girls who participate in or are affected by violence are almost always overlooked. Often cast as victims, passive in the face of uncontrolable adversity, the resilience and agency of girls in these environments is frequently sidelined (Brett & McCallin, 1998).

Recognizing the pivotal role Hermione Granger plays in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as The Trio become increasingly involved in the conflict with the Death Eaters and Voldemort allows engagement with the varying experiences of girls in conflicts. Using a feminist lens to highlight and examine various aspects of Hermione's role opens up space to explore experiences of "real world" girls, which often transgress dominant understandings of their "appropriate place."

Hermione's role as an active member of The Trio (and to a lesser extent Dumbledore's Army) is linked in this essay to feminist critiques of girls in conflict and situations of violence in our world and how they are frequently portrayed or marginalized (Fox, 2004:469). Particularly, this essay will examine Hermione as a (girl) soldier/fighter; Hermione's assumed victim-status because of her gender; and the ties to family and created community that bind Hermione as a fighter in the Second Wizarding War against Voldemort. These three themes will allow reflection on issues of invisible girl soldiers around the world, gendered insecurity, and a feminist exploration of the way girls in situations of violence negotiate their environment and make strategic choices that negate conceptions of girls as passive victims and innocents. In such a deconstruction, Hermione provides a vehicle to discuss real world marginalization and silencing. This furthers the aims of both J.K. Rowling, and feminist endeavors more broadly, in recognizing injustice and inequality in our own world.[1]

Conflict in Harry Potter

That a war is central to the overarching narrative of the *Harry Potter* series is rarely acknowledged or analyzed in discussion of the series. While this conflict does not come to a head until the final book, it is not a small conflict, and all seven books in the series build towards it. While Britain's Wizarding community might not be particularly large, once Voldemort and his Death Eaters start fighting their war openly, their attacks not only affect those at the center of the story but Muggles across the country (see, in particular, the conversation between the Minister for Magic and the British Prime Minister in the first chapter of *H-BP*, but examples exist throughout *H-BP* and *DH*). The narrative displays all the consequences of war and conflict: there are deaths, people are kidnapped and held hostage, familiar places become dangerous, "home" (Hogwarts, and in the case of the films, The Burrow) is destroyed, the characters live on the run, gangs (such as the Snatchers (*DH*, p. 331)[2] operate with impunity, families are torn apart, people are scarred and damaged (in particular Bill Weasley's horrific scarring from his encounter with the werewolf Fenrir Greyback (*DH*, pp. 571–572), sides are armed, all people are implicated, sacrifices are made, ideologies are promoted, and through it all life goes on amid a constant feeling of fear and terror. Uncertainty reigns just as it does in "real life" conflicts.

Behind this current conflict, there is also a legacy of war and violence, especially Dumbledore's confrontation with the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945 and the previous reign of Voldemort. Grindelwald is a dark wizard, who is debatably almost as evil as Voldemort. J.K. Rowling noted that the date of Dumbledore's confrontation with Grindelwald is not coincidence. In response to a question in an interview relating the date to World War II she stated, "It amuses me to make allusions to things that were happening in the Muggle world, so my feeling would be that while there's a global Muggle war going on, there's also a global wizarding war going on" (www.mugglenet.com, 2005). Much of this violence directly affects the Trio, in particular the death of Harry's parents, James and Lily Potter.

In the middle of this upheaval stands the Trio, all courageous in their own ways, all with their own weaknesses, including Hermione as the sole girl. If we are to look at the effects of conflict in the world of Harry Potter through a feminist lens, then what deserves more attention is how the girls of Hogwarts–and in particular Hermione—negotiate and understand the violence that surrounds them.

In many explorations of the world of Harry Potter, the conflict is somehow sidelined in favor of examination of the myriad other fascinating aspects. However if we are to endeavor to locate Hermione as a feminist model in some way, we should be conscious of the multitude of roles she occupies. One, quite central, role is as a fighter, in a world made dark and dangerous through conflict.

Hermione as a "Signifier"

The great battle for the Wizarding World, which builds through the series and comes to an explosive head in the final book, *DH*, is a battle of good versus evil; of those who fight for love versus those who have no memory of love; of acceptance, tolerance and respect versus authoritarianism, hatred and greed. It is experienced by the reader through Harry's eyes, and at times through Harry's mind. It revolves around his love for his friends, for those who have become his family and the place that has become his home. Cedric Diggory's death at the end of *GoF* marks the beginning of a darker period in the lives of Harry specifically, the Trio by implication and the Wizarding World in general. J.K. Rowling is not afraid to deal with the darker, sadder themes and issues that emerge.

However, in the analysis in this essay, I do not intend to make direct comparisons between the experiences of the characters in the *Harry Potter* series and the experiences of young people in conflicts around the world. Particularly, I do not intend to *equate* the experiences of Hermione with those of girls affected by real life conflicts. However, I do want to argue that Hermione's experiences, and the way she is perceived by those around her, can act in some way as a signifier, a representation, a pause, to draw attention to a much-marginalized issue of feminist preoccupation: girls in conflict. The experiences of girls in conflicts can be traumatic, physically damaging, isolating and violent; and in many cases they display amazing resilience and courage. Thus the discussion undertaken here is not meant to be read as a minimization or misrecognition of the intensely difficult experiences and consequences of girls' involvement in conflicts. In this, Hermione is considered less in terms of being an idealized feminist icon but rather is looked at through a feminist lens, for her actions as a signifier of broader issues involving girls in conflicts.

Feminist Approaches to Gendering Conflict

War is often seen and characterized as a male sphere, with men (and boys) as the main protagonists. Women (and girls), if they appear at all, are victims or loyal supporters, and are portrayed in supportive roles; they maintain the home, they nurse the injured, they care for the children and weep for the dead. From playground fights to international conflict, the trope holds that men make war and women make peace.[3] Such a trope is maintained and perpetuated by an adherence to the belief that gendered identities define

and limit the scope of potential involvement and participation. The consequence of maintaining such a view is the invisibility of women and girls' involvement and participation in conflicts, whether unavoidable or chosen, and a continued adherence to stereotypical readings of females as passive and peaceful. Yet the experiences of females in conflicts far exceed this narrow, dichotomizing portrayal.

Jacklyn Cock argues that there are two competing perspectives on the involvement of females in conflicts: the sexist view which argues that women are excluded because of their physical weakness and temperament, and the feminist approach which sees the exclusion of women as a result of a patriarchal system of control of power. Cock argues that both these views agree that the military (and, it could be argued, informal armed groups) are seen as "patriarchal institution[s] from which women are excluded and by whom women are often victimized" (Cock, 1992).

Feminist critiques of marginalization help to rehabilitate an understanding of girls in conflict. Bina D'Costa (2006, p. 130) argues that marginalization, while a contested topic, is associated with "economic and political weakness or powerlessness" and exemplifies her statement by recognizing that "women and children remain socially, politically, and economically marginal in traditional and patriarchal societies because of their gender or age." While it is simplistic to argue that all feminist work always groups children with women, it is not an extreme generalisation to note that patriarchal structures which relegate women to the private realm also locate children there.

Twenty years ago, gender theorist Cynthia Enloe introduced the phrase "womenandchildren: to capture the totalizing nature of theoretical approaches that naturalize a link between women and children as the non-political bodies—innocent, voiceless, passive—on which political violence is inflicted" (Enloe in Sylvester 1994; see Carpenter, 2006 for a discussion of the norms and assumptions that allow this categorisation to exist and perpetuate). Girls in conflict challenge such a reading explicitly as they find themselves "in a position that breaks down dichotomies between civilian and combatant, victim and perpetrator, initiate and initiated, protected and protector.... In this way they occupy a world of their own" (Honwana, 2006, p. 4). Honwana thus argues that "we must go beyond the clear-cut demarcations between child and adult and between innocence and guilt" (Honwana, 2006, p. 4).

Yet if the dominating message in literature, policy and practice continues to be of females as somehow passive, innocent, and vulnerable (and girls, by extension even more so by virtue of their age), then a key feminist project in studies of conflict and violence is to question this naturalisation. Authors such as Enloe (2000, 2004), and others including Elshtain (1995), Lorentzen and Turpin (1998) and Moser and Clark (2001), challenge and complicate the location of women in conflict recognizing that

while they are often victimized through violence, sexual assault, destruction of their homes and other means, they also participate in and support militarized practices through active combat, socializing of their sons into "warrior mentality" and inciting violence; and they also resist violence and conflict, mobilizing through networks in various protests and action against the situation they find themselves in.

J.K. Rowling does give women a larger role in the conflict than "traditional" war narratives allow (the value or consequences of this are open to varying interpretations). The teachers at Hogwarts are in the thick of it during the final confrontation with Voldemort and Professor McGonagall is key in organizing the students and staff (Professor Sprout also is heavily involved). Mrs. Weasley's confrontation with Bellatrix LeStrange is also worth noting for its ferocity and significance to the story. Bellatrix herself is an interesting, strong, if irredeemably evil, woman fighter as well. Mrs. Weasley's reason for fighting stems explicitly from her role as mother in which Bellatrix aims a curse at Ginny Weasley, prompting an invective-filled scream from Mrs. Weasley ("Not my children you bitch!") before they duel. Mrs. Weasley tells Bellatrix "*You-will-never-touch-our-children-again!"* (*DH*, pp. 589–590). Yet in all other cases the fact that women are participating is entirely unremarkable. In many ways, such examples, particularly from Mrs. Weasley and Professor McGonagall, serve as excellent feminist role models for Hermione (as well as other female characters, and readers of any gender).

"Child Soldiers" and Invisible Girls

> *"So young ... to be fighting so many...."*—Griphook the goblin, to the Trio, [DH, p. 396]

"The term *child soldier* is an oxymoron that signifies the violence that this position does to established social categories" (Honwana, 2006, p. 51). Alcinda Honwana's observation resonates with the burgeoning literature on child soldiers, which has grown in recognition over the past fifteen years as both a crucial area of academic study, and as an area of increased attention by policy makers and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) (see in particular Brett & McCallin, 1998; Denov, 2010; Gates and Reich, 2010; Boyden and de Berry, 2004; Machel, 1996, 2001, 2007; Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994). While children have long been involved in conflicts, the increased proliferation of light arms such as AK-47s and similar have allowed the use of children as active combatants as well as in a range of other roles. In this discussion,

it is commonly assumed that the term "children" refers to anyone under the age of eighteen years old which stems from broad consensus through the United Nations, encoded in the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" (United Nations, 1989).

Globally there are estimated to be approximately 300,000 child soldiers in both state and non-state armies in the world (this number is subject to contention, and is obviously limited due to the imprecise nature of data collection around such a figure) (Brett & McCallin, 1998, 30–31).[4] The definition of child soldiers includes not only those who hold a weapon but is understood to also consist of anyone under the age of 18 years being used as lookouts, messengers and spies, as well as those who travel along and engage in any kind of camp maintenance, and those who are forced by the armed group (formal or informal) to engage in any kind of associated labor or to provide sexual services (see the Cape Town Principles (UNICEF, 1997)). In part, this broad definition ensures that a maximum number of young people receive treatment and protection intended specifically for child soldiers, including girls, both during and after conflict.

Children are generally seen as passive and innocent, unable to comprehend their involvement in events beyond their understanding, manipulated by "evil" adults. Alternatively they are seen as delinquents; out of place and potentially dangerous, having transgressed "accepted" childhood behaviors (McEvoy-Levy 2006, pp. 136–7). Such conceptions are firmly rooted in western conceptions of childhood, and fail to account for the experiences of young people involved in conflicts, which far exceed "normal" (whether local or western) understandings (Boyden and de Berry, 2004; McEvoy-Levy, 2006; Pupavac, 2001; Brocklehurst, 2006). Such dominant conceptions hide the lived reality of young people involved in conflict. Additionally such powerful narratives function to totalize *all* experience, and further hide the specificities of the marginalization and challenges of being female *and* young *and* involved in conflict.

This, then, raises the important question of how to conceive of girls involved in conflict. Girls, along with boys, serve in armed groups, are displaced, lose family and friends, suffer from lack of access to resources including water, shelter and health services, experience terminated or interrupted education, and in these situations suffer trauma and distress (Machel, 1996). Additionally girls are at greater risk of sexual assault which is not only intensely traumatic but includes the risks of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, forced abortion, and physical mutilation (de Berry, 2004; West, 2000; Turshen, 2001). While there is important work on girls affected by conflict, but who did not participate in the armed groups, the focus of this essay is on girls *as part of* a fighting force. This distinction has been made in consideration of Hermione's central role in the conflict with the Death Eaters, in which

she most was definitely involved with the front-line fighting, and the associated tasks of conflict.

The Agency of Children: Headstrong Hermione (and a Willful Weasley)

> *"You said to us once before," said Hermione quietly, "that there was time to turn back if we wanted to. We've had time, haven't we?"*—H-BP, p. 607

At the time of the fifth book, *OotP*, Harry, Hermione and Ron, along with all the members of Dumbledore's Army (DA), are under eighteen. In fact, with the exception of the Weasley twins, Lee Jordan, Angelina Johnson, Katie Bell and Alicia Spinnet (all of whom are two years above the Trio at Hogwarts); all of the students in Dumbledore's Army are under eighteen for the entire duration of the books. However, their actions in response to the dark threat of the Death Eaters and Voldemort never seem "childish" to the reader. Their "adult" responses are particularly significant in a feminist examination of the roles adopted in particular by Hermione through the last three books of the series

Various authors dismiss Hermione as nothing more than a crutch for Harry's success (for example see Heilman, 2003). What such authors fail to observe is Hermione's own agency, which grows throughout the series.[5] Dresang (2002, pp. 226–227) notes that from the moment of being sorted into Gryffindor House by the Sorting Hat (with no hesitation) the reader knows Hermione possesses more than "just intelligence." Gryffindors are characterized by their "daring, nerve and chivalry" (the Sorting Hat's song in *PS*, p. 118). Dresang (2002, p. 227) notes that "these are all signs of self-determination, in the case of Hermione, against the external odds of initially acting chiefly as Harry's agent. It is no mistake that Hermione was sorted rapidly by the hat." Hermione's willingness and ability to defend both herself and others (such as house elves) increases through the books and demonstrates her growing independence and agency.

By the final book, Hermione is central to holding the Trio together in their desperate and, for a long time, fruitless, search for the Horcruxes. Her rapid decision making assists the Trio in a variety of ways. Two incidents in particular are relevant here. Firstly, they escape the Death Eaters at the Lovegoods' home through Hermoine's quick thinking, which also prompts her to hide Ron under the Invisibility Cloak (because he is meant to be at home sick with spattergroit) yet allow the Death Eaters see her and Harry, in an attempt to ease Xenophilius' punishment for letting them escape (*DH,* pp.

342–343). Secondly, shortly afterwards, her quick thinking leads her to hex Harry's face as they are captured by Snatchers, in an attempt to hide his identity (*DH,* p. 362).

In both cases Hermione demonstrates not only quick and independent thinking, but also chooses to protect others as well as herself. Her purpose and clear sightedness are the realization of a process of self-determination that occurs throughout the book, and her consideration of others, while it could be argued is nothing more than a reductive, inherently "feminine" trait, is actually a demonstration of her connection to a constructed "family" and community, and further evidence of her ability to choose allegiances and defend her choices.

Feminist studies, both of literature and of conflict, recognize the problem of girls being silenced by oppressive patriarchal structures. Dresang argues that Hermione avoids this problem, withstanding this "most dangerous gender-related pitfall" and avoiding being forced to "retreat into silence, intimidated by the masculine world" (2002, p. 229). In conflict, girls in particular suffer from silencing; coerced and forced into activities and action they did not chose. Stereotyped portrayals and understandings of girls affected by violence deny agency and voice. Long draws upon Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration to argue that the idea of agency "attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints that exist, social actors are 'knowledgeable' and 'capable'" (Long, 1992 pp. 22–23). A universal understanding of "agency" is not possible, as different cultures and situations provide different contexts. Further complicating understandings of how young girls respond to oppressive silencing structures is the need to recognize their particular vulnerability due to age and gender.

Child soldiers, while being marginalized in dominant discourse, do find ways in their day-to-day life of surviving, negotiating and carrying on. While they may be unable to affect large change, they do exercise what de Certeau (1984) calls "tactical agency" which is "play[ed] on and with a terrain imposed on it ... it operates in isolated actions, blow by blow ... it takes advantage of 'opportunities.'" Honwana notes that child soldiers in Angola

> seized spaces for secret conversations about home and their loved ones. They found time for play, music and laughter. Equally important, they managed to modify the military actions in which they were expected to engage. They deceived their superiors with false identities, escape plans and feigned illness ... [2006, p. 71].

Girls associated with armed forces will often make other difficult "tactical" decisions. Denov notes in her study of child soldiers in the Sierra Leone conflict that "amid a powerful patriarchal structure, girls became mere 'property' of males ... through sexual violence, girls' bodies became both literal and figurative sites of combat" (2010, p. 132). Denov (2010, pp. 132–133) found that young girls would chose "marriage" with one of the commanders rather than be "single" and at risk of sexual assault. Utas (2005) observes similar practices in Liberia also. It must be acknowledged that such an arrangement still involves a high degree of insecurity. Although this is fundamentally significantly problematic, it does appear to be a way for young girls to "attempt to reframe their victimization and, however minimally, transform it into a slightly more secure space" (Denov, 2010, p. 133). For a feminist critique such a recognition is vital as it allows acknowledgement of the way "contextually specific female and male positioning and agency in patriarchal gender systems" (Moser & Clark, 2001, p. 5; see also Cockburn, same volume 2001, pp. 13–29) contribute to form their social identities and self-understanding.

A feminist reading of both spaces seeks the ways in which, in the face of oppression and in the most challenging of situations, girls involved in and affected by conflict find ways to take control of their situation and make small impacts to improve things for themselves and those around them. In fact, examining the way not only the Trio but their friends and allies from the DA characterize their participation is a window into the motivations for young people's participation in conflict. Ginny Weasley's outburst when told by her mother she is only sixteen and she must wait in the Room of Requirement while the Battle for Hogwarts is underway demonstrates a self-determinism and attempt to define her own role independent of other forces and on her own terms:

> "I can't go home!" Ginny shouted, angry tears sparkling in her eyes. "My whole family's here, I can't stand waiting there alone and not knowing and—" [*DH*, p. 486].

Although, at that point, she does not defy Mrs. Weasley, a short time later she attempts to sneak out under cover of the discussion that is underway, and later has to leave the Room of Requirement where she is being made to stay so the Trio can enter it in its altered form as the storage room. She is later seen by Harry involved in the battle.

Luna Lovegood's calm insistence on going to the Ministry of Magic to attempt to rescue Sirius Black in *OotP* demonstrates another girl acting on her own initiative to choose to participate in a potentially dangerous situation.[6] Obviously, as outlined above, participation (and non-participation) occur for and in much more complicated ways, yet

outbursts such as Ginny's, read in addition to calm decision making by Luna and instinctive, clever responses such as Hermione's at several points of the seventh book, demonstrate young people's agency in choosing, if not the involvement itself, then the manner of their involvement in conflict and dangerous situations.

Violence and Resilience: Negotiating Gendered Insecurity

> *From above came Bellatrix's voice. "You are lying, filthy Mudblood, and I know it" ... Another terrible scream—*
> *"HERMIONE!" ["bellowed" by Ron in the dungeon]*
> *..."Tell me the truth or, I swear, I shall run you through with this knife! What else did you take, what else? ANSWER ME! CRUCIO!"*—DH, p. 377

Although girls do demonstrate agency and choice in their involvement in conflict, this does not mean girls in conflict can always chose how they will be involved, or the consequences of that involvement. While both Hermione in the *Harry Potter* books, and girls involved with armed groups in the real world, can exercise limited amounts of agency to affect their experience, they are also seen as vulnerable to particular violences and can be targeted by opposing forces because of their gender identity and age.

Violence, particularly sexual violence, predominantly perpetrated by men against girls in conflict situations, is noted in much of the conflict literature. It is important to recognize that such male violence is not a natural feature of masculinity or "manhood," but is the expression of a structure of power (see Cockburn 2007; Kelly 2000). While the issues of conflict may prompt the event, it is the "collective power imbalance between men and women of a patriarchal system" that means the "root cause of violence against women [is] the need of some men to maintain power and control over women on an individual level" (Mulheir and O'Brien in Cockburn, 2007, p. 212). And while all forms of violence against women occur in non-conflict situations also, the patriarchal structures so critiqued by feminist scholars, are deployed much more powerfully in militarized contexts, increasing the insecurity of women and girls in these situations. Girls in conflict face particular challenges as they become specific targets of sexual violence (see particularly McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Stavrou 2004; and Denov, 2010). It is important to note that not all girls experience sexual violence in conflict, and it can be counterproductive to generalize the experience. However, it is equally important not to understate the widespread use of sexual violence against girls in

conflicts. Girls in conflicts also experience other forms of violence in common with boys such as beatings, deprivation of food, rest, shelter or medical aid, forced marches and other degradations of body and spirit (Machel 1996; Stavrou 2004; Boyden & de Berry 2004).

Sexual violence against girls in conflicts takes many forms, including deliberate strategies of rape and forced pregnancy, such as occurred in the Bosnian conflict; campaigns of fear and intimidation through rape and other violence, such as is ongoing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and that occurred during the Rwandan genocide; sexual violence as a public display to break communal and familial ties, such as occurred in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Colombia, and many other conflicts; and the use of girls as "bush wives" of commanders, or communal "property" by armed groups in many conflicts including Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Uganda (on these examples see Engle, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2005; Meintjes, Pillay & Turshen, 2001; Sideris, 2001; Veale & Stavrou, 2007; Turshen, 2000; Denov, 2010; Honwana, 2006). In such situations, feminist analysis of such gendered violence refuses to recognize it as different from gender violence in other contexts (Kelly, 2000, p. 55). These acts, whether gang rape, individual rape, or rape with objects, have not only physical consequences on the bodies of the girls, including pregnancy, sterility and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, but cause traumatic emotional damage. Such violence perpetrated *on* and *through* the bodies of women and girls perpetuates misogynistic readings of female bodies as unworthy, and is closely linked to masculinist policies of states and international systems.

Death Eater Bellatrix Lestrange believes the Trio has accessed her vault at Gringotts (the Wizarding Bank) and selects Hermione to be tortured for information under the Cruciatus Curse while Harry and Ron are confined to the (nearby) dungeon (*DH*, p. 375).[7] It is doubtful Bellatrix's choice is random. Rather it is more likely she chooses Hermione because of inherent assumptions about gendered weakness, and also because in selecting Hermione and removing her from the Trio she is also hurting Harry and Ron (particularly Ron who cannot bear to hear Hermione's screams coming from above). However, Hermione proves resilient and even manages to lie to Bellatrix while experiencing the Curse.[8] While gendered assumptions operate up to that point, it is in this resilience that Hermione resists stereotypical gendered reactions. While Hermione was lucky in that her torture was only short lived, and she seemingly recovered with only a brief rest (*DH*, pp. 386–392) girls affected by conflict deal with the consequences of violence which can be intense, repetitive and long term—in some cases years—while the emotional and physical consequences can last far beyond the period of conflict.

There are moments where J.K. Rowling's portrayal of Hermione conforms to stereotypes of "passive" girls and "heroic" boys (however, it could also be convincingly read simply as portraying her as human and subject to change and imperfectness). In *GoF* Hermione becomes the passive "sleeping beauty," the victim of a (presumed) violent kidnapping and entrapment below the water guarded by seemingly ferocious merpeople; she is that which Viktor Krum (one of the other competitors) "will sorely miss." She also is Petrified by the Basilisk in *CoS* and thus is unable to participate in the conclusion of the drama (although she provides the key piece of information, which she had written on a scrap of paper and was holding when Petrified).

Hermione's "feminine" vulnerability in the conflict is also highlighted in other ways. Fenrir Greyback, a werewolf working for Voldemort, while forcing Harry and Ron down into the cellar while Bellatrix tortures Hermione, taunts the two boys: "Reckon she'll let me have a bit of the girl when she's finished with her? ... I'd say I'll get a bite or two, wouldn't you, Ginger [referring to Ron]*?"*(*DH*, p. 375).[9] Hermione's girl-status is accentuated and played upon by Greyback to invoke fear; in particular Ron's affection for Hermione is recognized and exploited by Greyback to inflict further suffering. In real world situations the girl-status of young girls in fighting forces is used strategically to assure loyalty, to punish dissent, and to reinforce hierarchy (see Denov, 2010; West, 2000).

"...Above all, pity those who live without love..."[10]: Family, friends and the construction of "community"

> *"—are you sure you've thought this through?" Harry persisted.*
> *"...I've also modified my parents' memories ... I think I've cast a good enough charm to keep them safe and happy ... [they] don't know that they've got a daughter, you see." Hermione's eyes were swimming with tears again.*
> *"I—Hermione, I'm sorry—I didn't—"*
> *"Didn't realize that Ron and I know perfectly well what might happen if we come with you. Well we do...."*—DH, p. 84

> *"Once you were in RUF territory, your family was the RUF'*—Girl, Sierra Leone, cited in Denov, 2010, p. 104

FAMILY TIES

The world of Harry Potter is full of families and the importance of connections to and between family members. For Harry, his absent family is present—(invoked through conversation mostly, but at various points physically with him: in the Mirror of Erised (*PS*), and in the lead up to the final confrontation with Voldemort (*DH*) at the very core of the story. Ron's expansive, welcoming family is deeply important to Ron, and comes to be a surrogate family to Harry as well. However, Hermione's family is almost entirely absent. As readers we do not even know her parents' names, and know only that they are Muggle dentists. The Weasleys occupy a large portion of "family time" in Hermione's experiences during the series (as she spends many holidays with them). In part, this may be because her own parents are Muggles, and thus unable to fully participate in the Wizarding World. When Hermione gets appointed Prefect along with Ron in the fifth book, she asks to borrow Harry's owl to let her parents know—"They'll be really pleased—I mean prefect is something they can understand" (*OotP*, p. 151)—demonstrating the difficulties Hermione must face in maintaining a relationship with her parents once she is firmly within the Wizarding World. Despite this, Hermione's choice to modify her parents' memories before she leaves to find the Horcruxes with Ron and Harry is a powerful reminder of the connection Hermione has to her family.

It also allows reflection on what young people give up when they join or are forced into armed forces in the real world. Family can be seen to make young people more vulnerable to attacks from the other forces, and it is also seen as a powerful cause of desertion. For this reason, there have been various cases of young people, both boys and girls, being forced to perform acts of violence against their own communities, including arson, physical violence such as beating relatives or even killing them, or sexual violence against family or community members. Such horrific acts prevent young people from feeling they are able to return home; it breaks communal bonds (Machel, 1996; Denov, 2010, p. 104).

In their place, commanders substitute the armed unit, naming it a "family" and reinforcing the message that it is now the young people's primary unit of care and allegiance (Peters & Richards, 1998). While the Death Eaters did not compel the young people of Hogwarts to harm their own families, they did deliberately attack the families of those sympathetic to Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix. This includes the Weasleys' residence (attacked during the wedding of Bill and Fleur (*DH*, pp. 133). Additionally, Hogwarts, which becomes a powerful site connected to a sense of "home" for Harry and the others, comes under direct attack by the Death Eaters (in both *H-BP* and *DH*).

Alternatively, young people leave their families to avoid them being targeted; they refer to the suffering of their family as a reason for their participation in a conflict, either hoping to protect their family by joining an armed group, or to relieve their parents of the burden of caring for them, particularly in the context of low supplies of food and other basic necessities (Kenyon Lischer, 2010, p. 157 in research on the Democratic Republic of Congo). James Pugel's (2010, pp. 170–173) description of motivation for young people to join rebel forces in Liberia corroborates such justifications. In several cases, young people saw joining as a way of protecting their family and working towards what is seen as a safer future. One child soldier from Angola told of lying to protect their family: "When I was kidnapped, I gave the soldiers a false name, not my real one. I didn't want them to know my family and make my parents suffer" (cited in Honwana, 2006, p. 67).

In both situations, young people are left without adults to help socialize and guide them in the process of growing up. In some situations, this is particularly damaging. Honwana notes that in Mozambique and Angola, practices that socialized young people into adulthood were dismantled by conflict:

> Young men and women have to make sense of their world and navigate their own transition to adulthood within an environment of societal chaos. In this process many youths construct their own imaginary spaces and symbolic worlds with whatever means are available to them [Honwana, 2006, p. 54].

In such situations, young people have to find alternate means of making sense of their world, and to use their own agency and self-determination to do this. In the world of Harry Potter, although the Trio are not entirely bereft of adults to assist, they chose to operate largely on their own. With the death of Albus Dumbledore, it seems the role of a guide who possesses and imparts wisdom to assist with their journey is eliminated and no one else can quite fill that space. For Hermione, Dumbledore's gift of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, left to her in his will (*DH*, p. 107), is a significant gift, recognizing not only a shared love of wisdom acquired through reading, but also a recognition that Hermione has the intelligence to know what to do next; an acknowledgement of both her agency and her growing independence.

CREATED FAMILY AND (FEMINIST) COMMUNITY

Eliza Dresang comments that, from a feminist point of view, it is notable that Hermione is "essentially without the context of 'sisterhood'" and that her lack of family and same-gender friends "does nothing to strengthen an often-referred-to-feminist characteristic—

a closely knit, supportive, same-gender community" (2002, p. 231). Perhaps she can be excused for such a statement, coming as it did only part way through the publication of the *Harry Potter* series, and before the burgeoning of several of Hermione's friendships, including a close one with Ginny Weasley, and with other members of the DA. However, in many ways, such a critique is out of step with two important aspects of J.K. Rowling's world: firstly, that this is a world of equality, where respect, tolerance and fairness are advocated, against a dark force of prejudice, exclusivity and discrimination; and secondly, that in searching for a "sisterhood," Dresang has underestimated the importance of the bond between the Trio, irrespective of gender.

Mimi R. Gladstein sees Hermione not as just a sidekick to two male protagonists (Harry and Ron) but "an equal and essential member" (2004, p. 50). The friendship of the Trio is more powerful than family, and is crucial in all their adventures throughout the books, but most importantly to find the Horcruxes and finish Voldemort forever. In many ways, the friendship of the Trio *becomes* family to them all, particularly after Hermione and Ron deliberately leave behind their families to help Harry. Harry even explicitly evokes this relationship when Ron rejoins them after leaving their search for the Horcruxes: "...it was only now that Ron was here again that Harry fully realized how much his absence had cost them... 'I love [Hermione] like a sister and I reckon she feels the same way about me. It's always been like that. I thought you knew'" (*DH*, p. 308).

This created community is also a broader phenomenon in the story. When the Trio arrives back at Hogwarts for the final battle, they find the original members of Dumbledore's Army waiting, as they have been using the galleons that were enchanted to notify members of meetings in *OotP* (*DH,* p. 463). Particularly for Neville Longbottom, Luna Lovegood, and Ginny Weasley, the DA becomes an invaluable network of friends, a created community upon which they can rely.

The importance of created community is also central to the experience of many girls who have been forced into service in an armed group. Often violently removed from their biological families and communities, they find ways of coming together to provide support and comfort. In contexts of often extreme male violence, girls form close friendships and what Denov describes as "secret solidarity" (2010, p. 134) among peers. In the RUF (Revolutionary United Front, an armed resistance group in Sierra Leone), such interaction was strictly forbidden, yet the relationships "not only brought a degree of solace, comfort and solidarity, but also created a unique physical and emotional space for compassion" (Denov, 2010, p. 135). Such spaces are often tentative and subject to brutal dismantling, but also provide invaluable support and resilience to young girls who find themselves in these situations.

Although not a direct parallel, it is easy to draw connections between the importance placed on created community by Hermione in the lead up to and during the Battle for Hogwarts; and the role created community plays in the day to day existence of young girls in armed groups during conflict. Family, whether of blood or love, and whether left behind by choice or abandoned, provides emotional, and at times physical support and comfort to Hermione. Such support allows Hermione to reach her potential, and in return "pay back" her created community as they stand together against Voldemort and the powers that would tear them apart at the conclusion of the series.

Life After Conflict

Rarely in real world conflict are the lines so clearly drawn as they are by J.K. Rowling in the battle for the future of the Wizarding World. Michael Wessels points out that the "socialization of children into fighting and systems of social division and hatred sets the stage for ongoing cycles of violence" (2010: 183). Ongoing challenges through the period of ending of conflict into the grey area of post-conflict peacebuilding all present real difficulties to children involved in armed forces (Veale & Stavrou, 2007). Young people's reintegration into communities can often be fraught with difficulty. While some go through formal processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) (UN Disarmament, 2006; see Knight and Ozerdem 2004, for potential challenges in this process), others "spontaneously reintegrate" (meaning they make their own way home with no outside assistance). Once in the communities (*if* they chose to return, many feel ashamed or scared of returning and make a life elsewhere), young people face the difficulties of finding work, being accepted by their family and friends, dealing with physical and psychological trauma, including the death of family and acquaintances, and adjusting to civilian life. "Victory" is rarely as clear in the real world either, and as Wessels notes conflicts can feed into future violence.

For young women, returning home can be further complicated as sexual contact (even if it was forced) can make them unsuitable for marriage or in some way bring shame upon families. Other girls returning home with babies or young children, born during their association with the armed group face similar problems. Health concerns and income are key sources of challenge for young women (Turshen, 2000, pp. 813, 815–16; Meintjes, Pillay & Turshen, 2001).

J.K. Rowling told fans after the release of the final book that Hermione manages to find her parents and restore their memories (Accio-quote.com, 2007). The Epilogue of *DH* also demonstrates that for most of the main characters, life moves on in a positive way. Such narrative ease obviously does not translate to the real world and the difficulties

facing young women continue to be informed by patriarchal structures frequently unchanged by the conflict. There are some cases, however, which hold promise. In Liberia, women's actions in forcing a peace settlement through continuous peaceful process assured women a presence at the peace table and saw the election of a woman president. In Rwanda, the first post-genocide parliamentary elections in 2003 saw almost 50 percent representation by women, which has helped assure women's priorities are heard in the rebuilding (Powley, 2005). While both Liberia and Rwanda are held as success stories, it is important to recognize there are major issues that continue to complicate the struggle for gender equality in these countries. Generally, girls affected by conflict, particularly those who participate in armed forces, encounter ongoing challenges long after the conflict has come to a formal end.

Conclusion

While all young people associated with conflict suffer and negotiate incredibly dangerous and difficult situations, often their experiences are reduced to generalized assumptions. Limited by both their gender and their age, the experiences of girls in conflict are often even more fraught. For feminist scholars, it is vital that the margins of experiences are explored and that those that exist within them are recognized and engaged with. In our attempts to engage in a meaningful way with these experiences, then, we must recognize the agency and self-determination these young women possess, which allows them to navigate the situations they encounter and to improve their conditions in small ways. This is not to minimize the potential for traumatic experiences of violence, particularly sexual violence, which are commonplace in many conflict zones and which have profound effects on the young women involved. Such behavior is linked to patriarchal institutions of control which condone and perpetuate the exercise of power in this way. Yet young women are resilient and build community with peers when they do not have access to their own family and community and which provides a deep support to them in situations of vulnerability and difficulty.

While Hermione's experience in the Second Wizarding War, particularly as a member of The Trio and Dumbledore's Army, is not directly comparable to the experiences of young women in armed forces globally in the contemporary world, Hermione and her experiences can be used as signifiers of crucial feminist discussion on the presence, role and experience of girls in conflict. Hermione herself, with her commitment to shedding light on injustices, and her opposition to the perpetuation of institutions and practices that marginalize and negatively affect those often hidden from view (through, for example, her involvement in S.P.E.W), could only agree.

Notes

1. J.K. Rowling responded to readers' questions at a reading of *DH* at Carnegie Hall, New York, 20 Oct, 2007 including the following quote: "I wanted Harry to leave our world and find exactly the same problems in the wizarding world. So you have the intent to impose a hierarchy, you have bigotry, and this notion of purity, which is this great fallacy, but it crops up all over the world.... The Potter books in general are a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry"

2. Page numbering conventions in this piece follow the Australian versions of the novels.

3. There has been an extensive and detailed literature on war as a masculinized space, and the location of women within conflict that has emerged over the past several decades. Elshtain (1995) and Enloe (2000, 2004) should be read as foundational to this discussion.

4. The authors based this figure on the 36 conflicts underway through the 1990s. The authors state this is a conservative estimate and if "all recruitment of under-18s is taken into account, including that undertaken in peacetime and in conformity with the applicable national legislation then the numbers worldwide would be more than doubled" (1998, 31). As noted, while this number is now quite old, and considered in some ways problematic, it continues to be cited as a rough guide and estimate up to the present day.

5. I do recognize that in the case of some critiques, such as Heilman's 2003 contribution, not all the Harry Potter books had been released at the time of writing, and aspects of Hermione's character (like all characters) become more fully realized as the series progresses.

6. In this case, Luna not only provided the solution to get them to the Ministry when she suggested flying on Thestrals (skeletal winged-horses visible only to those who have seen Death) but also saved Ron from a curse during the resultant battle in the Department of Mysteries and then led him and Ginny to reunite with the rest of the DA members (in chapters 33 *Fight and Flight* and 35 *Beyond the Veil, OotP*). Such action is not out of character, but continues throughout the series: in *DH* she (along with fellow students, Ernie and Seamus) cast Patronuses to protect everyone when the Trio's fade in the face of "one hundred dementors," and she encourages Harry to think of something happy: "We're all still here.. we're still fighting. Come on, now..." (*DH*, p. 522).

7. Although Bellatrix is an adult, her actions in this sequence of the book provide an interesting opportunity to reflect on how girls in fighting forces can become complicit in the performance of violence (against all kinds of people, including other girls), and also how a mixture of respect/adoration and fear frequently defines their relationship with their superiors (see Denov, 2010, pp139–144). We can see Bellatrix's desire to call Voldemort to the Manor curtailed by her need to ensure her information is correct because of fear of punishment if it is not (*DH*, pp. 373 and 382–383).

8. Once they are out of danger Harry recognizes Hermione's enormous courage and resilience: "'How are you?' Harry asked Hermione. 'You were amazing—coming up with that story when she was hurting you like that—'" (*DH*, p. 392). However, after that point Hermione's ordeal is essentially "forgotten" and seems to have no lasting impact or negative consequences.

9. When Bellatrix decides she knows enough from torturing Hermione, she says she thinks "we can dispose of the Mudblood. Greyback, take her if you want her" (*DH,* p. 382), both a dismissal and a discounting of the importance of Hermione's physical and self in the situation.

10. Dumbledore to Harry (*DH,* p. 578)

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Hermione Granger: Insufferable Know-It-All or Superhero?

CHRISTINE KLINGBIEL

Fantasy is useful. Many people have argued this, from psychologists to fiction writers. Bruno Bettelheim (1989), tells readers in his book, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, that children need fantasy in order to think outside the box, to externalize emotions and imagine more possibilities that their current situation offers. Also children can use fantasy characters to gain vicarious satisfaction. While Bettelheim himself would not consider the *Harry Potter* novels fairy tales, it certainly has many fairy tale elements and can function in the same way. Hermione Granger does well at school. She speaks up and is not afraid to tell people what she knows. While girls today might not see a reason to be less smart or more meek than boys, there is a disturbing trend that makes showing you are smart in school uncool for both boys and girls. Hermione Granger is at first not cool, a "know-it-all" as Professor Snape unkindly says. But during the course of the story she writes her own rules. She is allowed to be just who she is, after learning some lessons herself. She is "the cleverest witch of [her] age" as she helps Harry defeat the dark wizard, Lord Voldemort (Rowling, 1999, *PoA*, p. 346). In this sense, she has power. Gerard Jones (2002), in his book, *Killing Monsters: Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence*, analyzes the new female super heroes. They show strength like the traditional male super hero but they have the added component of attractiveness. And they are allowed greater emotional range. If they are good role models for girls, however, is a matter of much debate. Hermione can be considered a new female super hero because she is also a power fantasy. Her strength is her magic. Her power is knowledge. Knowledge, in the world of Harry Potter, is power. It is strength. What Harry, Ron and Hermione learn helps to defeat the Dark Lord. The prophecy tells us that Harry has "power the dark lord knows not." Harry is disappointed when Dumbledore tells him this means simply his ability to love. But understanding how love works as a powerful force, enables Harry, Hermione and Ron to defeat Voldemort. What Voldemort doesn't know, time and time again, is his undoing. In their quest to defeat Voldemort, Hermione is their repository of knowledge. She does the hardest, most complex spells *and* she springs into action. She is a powerful fantasy character and therefore functions as a power fantasy without the vexing doubts that other female super heroes present. Hermione Granger is not an insufferable know-it-all; she is a powerful know-it-all and a good fantasy role model for girls.

Got Magic?

Once upon a time, one of the first stories we read as children was most likely a fantasy story. It may not have had a prince, wizard or dragon, but it had magic, something that couldn't happen literally, only figuratively; not in the real world but in the world of our minds. It may have involved being swallowed by a whale, an orphan plucked from a river, a young girl spinning straw into gold, a little fish finding his way back home, or a child's toy coming to life. If you were not told one of these stories, if you did not read it in a book, you might have seen it in a movie. The movie might have come out yesterday, but that story or parts of that story might be 2,000 years old.

Bruno Bettelheim (1989) would not agree with me that these stories have similarities. In his book, *Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, he only analyzes fairy tales and their uses for children, defining the fairy tale very narrowly. Bettelheim excludes realistic stories, of course, but also myths, Biblical stories, and contemporary stories. Mythical and religious stories offer explanations of the world that make us feel secure; however, "not even during the most religious of times were these stories sufficient for meeting all the psychic needs of man" (Bettelheim, 1989, p. 52). For example, Bettelheim says Biblical stories "provided answers to the crucial questions of how to live the good life, they did not offer solutions for the problems posed by the dark side of our personalities" (p. 52). A strong follower of Freudian psychology, Bettelheim believed that people struggle to control their more primal, basic desires, also known as "id" impulses and that children (being less experienced with the world and what actions are acceptable in society) have a harder time doing so. Children also have a harder time knowing what their id impulses are and how to talk about them.

Fairy tales deal with these baser impulses by embodying them in good and evil characters. For example, the evil stepmother in *Snow White* can symbolize vanity or jealously (as Snow White replaces her as "fairest of them all"). The witch in *Hansel and Gretel* symbolizes greed or gluttony (as she stores riches and feasts upon children). What child hasn't felt jealous of a sibling or wanted all the cookies for themselves? Fairy tales talk about these things but in a concrete, therefore more understandable, way through symbols. Thus we have Bettelheim's theory of "externalization." Bettelheim (1989) writes, "a child has to externalize his inner processes if he is to gain any grasp —not to mention control—of them. The child must somehow distance himself from the content of his unconscious and see it as something external to him, to gain any sort of mastery over it" (p. 55). Bettelheim believed very strongly that fairy tales do not deal with the real world outside of us, but our inner world of thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This makes sense because what happens in fairy tales is not real. Giants live in the sky and hoard gold, animals speak (and build brick houses) and magic works. However, in another sense, it is real—true to how one feels—therefore they work as

metaphors. “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse! She was so angry she was spitting fire!” If you told a child to be clever, he or she might not grasp that abstract concept. But if you said, “be like Jack in *Jack and the Beanstalk*,” he or she would understand. It is also safer to talk about those id impulses of jealously, greed, anger, and fear. The child is talking about a character in a book, not themselves. “It can be openly talked about, because the child does not need to keep secret his feelings about what goes on in the fairy tale, or feel guilty about enjoying such thoughts,” writes Bettelheim (p. 57). At the same time, they could unconsciously be recognizing part of themselves in those characters. The stories give them reassurance that those feelings are present, other people have them too, and they can be controlled or overcome. The witch is burned in the oven. Good riddance to gluttony.

But wait; didn’t I say both good and bad characters? One interesting theory that Sheldon Cashdan (1999) advances in his book *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives* is that the protagonist also seems to embody just a touch or a tendency towards that same evil. Cashdan says, “Children, in listening to a fairy tale, unconsciously project parts of themselves into various characters in the story, using them as psychological repositories for competing elements in the self. The evil queen in *Snow White*, for example, embodies narcissism, and the young princess, with whom readers identify, embodies parts of the child struggling to over come this tendency” (p. 15). Don’t Hansel and Gretel greedily munch away at the witch’s house (*on* her house and later inside when she feeds them)? There is a greedy giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk* who hoards gold, but isn’t Jack also greedy when he steals some? Jack Zipes (2001) in *Sticks and Stones*: *The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* criticizes Harry Potter for being boring because he’s so good, but as one fan noted on a blog post, he also displays jealousy, pettiness, and anger. And we all know how annoying Hermione can be, spoiling everyone’s fun due to her own insecurities!

Externalization, Fairy Tales and Harry Potter

Bruno Bettelheim’s aversion to any modern tale might have to do with a scholar purposely limiting their subject matter to go more in depth with what they wish to explore, however, this narrow mindedness misses many stories that are at least equally useful to children and adolescents and possibly even more so since to many people today, fairy tales seem old and out-dated. More people today have seen Disney’s animated version of *Beauty and the Beast* than have read Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve’s story from 1740.

As any fan of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series can tell you, magic is a big part of the stories. Harry is very much like poor Cinderella, unloved by surrogate parents and picked on by a stepbrother. He is the youngest son; the smallest creature no one expects will amount to anything. Through magic, Harry discovers who he really is, which is a powerful wizard. "Yer a wizard ... an' a thumpin' good'un, I'd say, once yeh've been trained up a bit," Hagrid says (Rowling, 1997, *SS*, p. 51). While Harry finds power in the magical world, Hermione is an outcast—the muggle-born amongst wizards and witches. She is a bit like the ugly duckling at first. Like *Cinderella* and *The Ugly Duckling*, the *Harry Potter* stories inspire hope that a bad situation can be overcome. "It is impossible for a child to fantasize on his own that he will be rescued, that those who he is convinced despise him and have power over him will come to recognize his superiority" (Bettelheim, 1977, pp. 55–56). Arthur A. Levine, Vice President of Scholastic Books, has said this is what he liked about *SS.* Connie Ann Kirk (2003), who wrote *J.K. Rowling: A Biography*, says, "Harry's situation reminded Levine of the underdog, of all the people who are marginalized from society in one way or another. He thought that aspect of the story had universal appeal. It is a victory for the reader to find out with Harry that he actually possesses powers no one else around him has" (p. 78). When children (and even adults sometimes) are made to feel small, this is the secret knowledge they hold on to.

Like with a fairy tale, good and bad emotions can be externalized. Dumbledore is wisdom, McGonagall discipline, Snape jealously, Harry, Ron and Hermione are good and Voldemort is evil. Well, it's not that simple; J.K. Rowling writes complex characters, which are multi-faceted and therefore engaging. However, in Voldemort, we do see what happens when id impulses like anger are unchecked. In *DH*, Rowling writes: "Harry saw the white hand raise its wand and felt Voldemort's surge of vicious anger" (p. 85). Voldemort kills people when he is angry, and his fear (mostly of death) leads him to split his soul and become less human in order to gain immortality.

There is more than one split in *Harry Potter*. Critics of the *Harry Potter* series have called them sexist, such as Jack Zipes (2001) in his book *Sticks and Stones*, or have claimed Hermione is an "enabler of Harry's and Ron's adventures" (Heilman and Donaldson, 2009, p. 146). Yes, Harry is the protagonist and the focus of attention; we see other characters only in relation to him (therefore even Ron should be dubbed an enabler). Does that mean only female protagonists can be strong or good role models? Most readers identify with the protagonist, whether male or female; that's not to say other characters can't be good role models; they will always be seen in relation to the main character of the story. I don't believe that makes her a weaker character any more than Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*. Through cleverness and action, Gretel saves the day, first by outwitting the witch, then shoving her in the oven.

The *SS* might start off like a boy's adventure tale, but readers are also quickly introduced to Ron, and Hermione and follow all three characters as they grow up. It is rare to have three main characters that function as one (almost like the three-headed Fluffy). "We're with you whatever happens" Ron says in *H-BP* (p. 651). (This of course leads to a bit of awkward explaining and readers questioning why Hermione is always at Ron's house and not her parents' during breaks.) They each take part in solving the mysteries as exemplified in *SS* when Harry remembers he saw the name Nicolas Flamel on a chocolate frog card and Hermione reads about Flamel in a book, or more obviously when each takes a turn leading them through the obstacles guarding the sorcerer's stone.

The most noticeable bit of fluidity is between Harry and Voldemort. Like Cashdan suggests, there is a piece of evil (Voldemort) in Harry, literally. At the end of *CoS*, when Harry is appalled that Riddle suggested they are similar, Dumbledore says, "he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar" (p. 333). In the final book, it is revealed those transferred powers are the piece of Voldemort's soul that split off from him when he tried to kill baby Harry. Facing Voldemort, Harry does overcome some of the same fear that grips Voldemort, namely the fear of death. In each book, Harry, Ron and Hermione must battle Voldemort in some form, and readers see how they grow in power and confidence. It is interesting to note Hermione's transformation via polyjuice potion into Bellatrix Lestrange in *DH*. In some ways, Bellatrix is Hermione's opposite. While Hermione is logical and responsible, Bellatrix is insane and impulsive. However, as a devotional follower of the Dark Lord's orders, she embodies Hermione's mania for following rules and thus, can be read as a cautionary tale of what can happen when one doesn't think for themselves or question authority.

In order for the process of externalization to work such that a child or young adult can feel hope or relief or better about themselves and more secure in the world, the child must identify with a character or characters. The reason that many fairy tale characters, as well as Harry, Ron and Hermione, are so easy to identify with is because they start off not only completely normal, but as Levine put it, the underdog. Again, who hasn't felt this way at one time or another, whether it was real or imagined? By identifying with the fictional character, a child can gain vicarious satisfaction. Bettelheim states: "The fairy tale hero has a body, which can perform miraculous deeds. By identifying with him, and child can compensate in fantasy and through identification for all the inadequacies, real or imagined, of his own body" (p. 57). A child identifies with the hero, in other words, she imagines that she *is* the hero. She *is* strong, smart, rich, powerful or beautiful. You can begin to see where the satisfaction comes in. Bettelheim continues: "After his most grandiose desires have thus been satisfied in fantasy, the child can be more at peace with his body as it is in reality. The fairy tale even projects

this acceptance of reality for the child, because while extraordinary transfigurations in the hero's body occur as the story unfolds, he becomes a mere mortal again once the struggle is over" (p. 57). Notice also how Harry and Hermione return to "reality" (the muggle world) again at the end of each book. By identifying with Harry, Hermione and Ron, the reader experiences the same emotions, from powerlessness to powerful, from anxious to secure.

What kind of satisfaction do children and young adults gain from *Harry Potter*? That differs with every reader, because the idea here is that one gains what one needs at the moment. In the *New York Times* article "Growing Up With a Dose of Magic" by Viswanathan Kaavya, she says, "Harry's development followed my own ... I never lost the feeling that each Harry Potter story was relevant to my life" (2005, p. 12). Rowling wasn't writing about Viswanathan's life, nor mine, nor the lives of the hundreds who post similar statements on fan websites, but because of the familiar set in fantasy, a reader can externalize, gain vicarious satisfaction and apply ideas or lessons that are not necessarily written by the author but that the readers themselves contribute, to their own lives. Lisa Damour (2009) in her essay "Harry the Teenager: Muggle Themes in a Magical Adolescence" says, "young readers are likely attracted to elements in Rowling's first four books that reflect the dynamic, unconscious elements of preadolescent psychological development" and in the last three books, "teenage readers likely find many reflections of their own experiences" (p. 1). My niece Zoe, who is now twelve, has very much made Hermione her role model. "I want to be like Hermione because she's smart, she's sane, and she's not mean. She speaks out. She always tries to answer questions. She speaks her mind." Several months ago she told me about the "cool" girls at school who dressed fashionably but were also mean and exclusive. Further along in the conversation, she mentioned her 100 percent on a test. "See, you're cool too," I told her. "You're like Hermione cool." I don't know if that made her feel better at that time, but she continues to excel at school and is quite the "know-it-all" at home.

Power Fantasy

What do the heroes in fairy tales symbolize for children? Power. Gerard Jones (2002), cultural critic and comic book writer, wrote *Killing Monsters: Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence* to explore what children and adolescents get out of mass entertainment, especially media violence. He very much updates Bettelheim's theories, expanding them to include contemporary stories and older children. He explains Bettelheim's unwillingness to do the same thusly: "Bettelheim, however, was a product of the intellectual elite of prewar Austria, with an

antipathy for modern industrialized world forged by World War II and the Holocaust. America's mass, commercialized kid culture was alien and threatening to him" (Jones, 2002, p. 144). He goes on to relate: "once a group of parents and teachers asked Bettelheim about Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, a children's book with a nightmarish quality reminiscent of fairy tales. He hadn't read it, but based on a plot description he denounced it as not only valueless but probably harmful" (Jones, 2002, p. 143). The irony here is that is precisely the kind of knee jerk reaction of adult literalism and misunderstanding that Bettelheim was warning against in *Uses of Enchantment*, particularly in his chapter "Fear of Fantasy." Jones also complains that adults take these stories literally, but that is a mistake because they are fantasy and children and teens see them as such, and use them in a way adults just don't understand. Jones (2002) says, "I found young people using fantasies of combat in order to feel stronger, to access their emotions, to take control of their anxieties, to calm themselves down in the face of real violence, to fight their way through emotional challenges and lift themselves to new developmental levels" (p. 6).

So let's just agree with Bettelheim and Jones that fantasy stories are useful, especially because they have evil and violence, so that those feeling can be externalized and dealt with. Also they have heroes that overcome evil or lowly circumstances. These characters are often strong or clever or beautiful (or they *become* strong, clever, or beautiful). In a word, these are power fantasies. It makes sense that a child would fantasize about gaining more power. Children are small, weak, controlled by adults. As Jones writes, "our inability to master ourselves and our world brings pain, frustration, anxiety, and fear. One of our most profound yearnings as we grow up is simply to feel powerful" (p. 66). Being powerless is also exactly how many fairy tale heroes start out. Cinderella is controlled by her stepfamily, Hansel and Gretel are forced into the woods to starve, and the youngest son in *Puss and Boots* is left no inheritance but a cat. Harry Potter is a small scrawny boy with knobby knees, made to cook breakfast and sleep in the cupboard under the stairs. He is terrorized by his larger cousin. Hermione is a social outcast with no friends. While Zipes (2001) is quick to write off the books, he does suggest the plots "resemble the structure of a conventional fairy tale: a modest little protagonist, typically male, who does not at first realize how talented he is and who departs from his home on a mission ... (p. 177).

Even though Bettelheim dismissed the story in *Where the Wild Things Are*, consider what a great power fantasy it makes. The boy misbehaves and is sent to bed without supper; in other words, he is controlled by his parent. He dreams of going to an island of wild creatures and he is made king. Cinderella becomes a princess; Hansel and Gretel, the third son in *Puss and Boots* become rich. Harry, who never had any pocket money, suddenly has stacks of gold in a vault at Gringotts. Hermione becomes a school prefect. Becoming rich signifies independence, becoming royalty is the ultimate symbol

of power, but not power over others necessarily, power over one's self, autonomy. Bettelheim (1989) says, "to have become a king or queen at the conclusion of the story symbolizes a state of true independence, in which the hero feels secure, satisfied, and happy..." (p. 127). Other ways to symbolize power is through a strong body or having magical abilities that make the hero strong. Jones says, "becoming a warrior or superhero able to beat any bad guy is a generic but thrilling 'new ending' to all the everyday stories of not being old enough or powerful enough to make things come out the way children want (p. 67). By identifying with the hero in the story, a child can feel powerful even if he or she is not in real life. This good feeling also lasts longer than the duration of the tale; it is like a promise to the child, he or she can feel that, like the hero, he or she might be small and powerless now, but the future can hold good things.

Like Harry, Hermione is a small, slightly odd looking, socially unacceptable eleven year old. "She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair, and rather large front teeth" (Rowling, *SS*, 1997, p. 105). She is like the Ugly Duckling in looks as well as social standing. J.K. Rowling said in an interview with *TIME magazine*: "girls are very tolerant of her because she is not an uncommon female type—the little girl who feels plain and hugely compensates by working very hard and wanting to get everything just so" (2000, p. 108). Hermione is more of an outsider than the other characters because she is "muggle-born." She is totally from the outside world, while Ron is an insider and Harry is really just coming home to his own world after being in exile. "I don't belong here. I belong in your world—at Hogwarts" Harry tells Dobby in *CoS* (p. 16). He is also already well known in the magical world. This might be why Hermione has read every book on the magical world and knows all her schoolbooks by heart before she ever gets to Hogwarts (and has to let people know this). This could also explain her mania for following rules. She wants to be a part of this new society so much and prove that she belongs. Her worst fear is to be expelled. In *SS* she says, "We could all have been killed—or worse, expelled" (p. 162). This makes her annoying, bossy, nagging, and an "insufferable know-it-all" as Professor Snape says in *PoA* (p. 172).

The New Female Superheroes

Beginning with Beowulf, Moses, Siegfried, and continuing on with Percival, Roland, Arthur, to Superman, Batman, and yes, Harry Potter, most fictional heroes and superheroes were (and are) male. I believe fairy tales show a slight deviation of the pattern, perhaps because of the ones written by women in the 18th century. There you'll see Beauty who recues the Beast, or the youngest daughter striking out for adventure as in *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*, or *Rumplestilskin*. Still many fairy tales center on women's passivity; they are the prize to be won (*The Brave Little Tailor*, *The Golden*

Goose) or the object to be rescued (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel*, *Snow White*). Jones (2002) agrees and also adds "When women took power for themselves, the effect was usually destructive, and the women served as *femmes fatales*" (p. 149). Women characters were also defined in relationship to the men as mothers, sisters or love interests. "Women were typically portrayed as weak, unintelligent and needing to be rescued," says Gladys L. Knight (2010) in her book *Female Action Heroes: A Guide to Women in Comics, Videogames, Film, and Television*.

Things changed, but slowly, very slowly. Wonder Woman is often cited as the first female superhero. Knight (2010) says, "Wonder Woman, who first appeared in comic books in 1941, was the invention of a man named William Moulton Marston, a psychologist, who believed women would one day rule the world and wanted to influence the way young boys perceived women" (p. viii). Since then, however, female superheroes were few and far between. There was Emma Peel from *The Avengers* in the 1960s, Ellen Ripley from *Alien*, *The Bionic Woman* and *Charlie's Angels* in the 1970s. It wasn't until the 1990s that girl power really took hold in any significant way. *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Lara Croft Tomb Raider*, *Powerpuff Girls*, and *Kim Possible*, to name a few, entered the action hero stage. Jones (2002) writes: "The comic book industry was commercially revitalized partly by the fad for 'bad girls'—angry, powerful heroines who wrapped their exaggeratedly female bodies in skimpy clothes and went head-to-head with the toughest males" (p. 150). When these characters were well developed, they drew many young female readers to the superhero genre. Jones says, "Young people wanted to see, as one female movie fan told me, 'any chick in cool clothes who *kicks ass*!'" (p. 150). It used to be thought that girls didn't like comic books. Well, imagine that, put a few strong female characters in and story lines pertaining to girls, and viola! You've got a new fan base. I worked at GenCon, a popular gaming convention, between 1995 and 2003, and noticed a steady rise in female fantasy fans every year. My niece, when not re-reading *Harry Potter*, devours Japanese manga like many of her classmates.

The new female superheroes had strength and power like the male superheroes, but they were women and could look and act like women. According to Jones (2002), this afforded them greater emotional range, which made them better characters to use for vicarious satisfaction. Silent, confident, strength can be useful, but a character that can feel fear, vulnerability and grief allows children to know those emotions are okay too.

Knowledge Is Power

Jones (2002) tells us a magic wand can function as a gun, both being symbols of power. In the world of wizards and witches, magic is strength. One does not need a large body with muscles as Uncle Vernon and Dudley do in the muggle world. In order to gain magic, along with certain innate ability, one must also study for it. In Rowling's world, knowledge is power. Most of the action occurs in and around Hogwarts, the school of witchcraft and wizardry. While the Minister of Magic is Cornelius Fudge, everyone knows that Dumbledore, the most learned wizard, is the power behind the throne. He is on the Wizengemot and Fudge, the Minister, consults him regularly. Not allowing students to actually study defensive magic is Professor Umbridge's and the Ministry's way of limiting the power of the students. In *OoP*, Umbridge says, "...it is the view of the Ministry that a theoretical knowledge will be more than sufficient..." because they fear Dumbledore will use students to gain more power than the Ministry (p. 243). Voldemort is feared because of his knowledge of the dark arts. He was a brilliant student. And after his return to power in *GoF*, he boasts of having gone the farthest "along the path that leads to immortality" (p. 653).

Despite his boasts, Voldemort is "woefully ignorant" of some very important magic as Dumbledore tries to tell him (Rowling, 2005, *H-BP*, p. 444). This lack of knowledge leads to Voldemort's downfall. First off, because Voldemort learns only half the information contained in the prophecy, he kills his living body and forms the connection with Harry. (Harry literally has insider knowledge because he can see into Voldemort's mind.) Because Voldemort knows nothing about love, he doesn't foresee Lily Potter's protection, which is why the killing curse rebounded upon him and defeats his attempted return (and Professor Quirl) in *SS*. Even when he learns of Lily's protection, he still doesn't fully understand it and hastily takes Harry's blood to return in *GoF*, thereby making it difficult to kill Harry in *DH*. Finally, in *DH*, having knowledge that Voldemort doesn't, makes Harry calm, if not certain, during their final showdown. He says, "I know things you don't know, Tom Riddle. I know lots of important things that you don't" (Rowling, *DH*, 2007, p. 738). Voldemort didn't know Snape was a double agent, and he didn't know Draco became the master of the Elder wand (not Snape) and that subsequently Harry became the master.

If knowledge is power, Hermione, being the "cleverest witch of [her] age," as Lupin says, is a very powerful fantasy character (Rowling, 1999, *PoA*, p. 346). "She is a prime example that information brings power, and she sees this at work repeatedly in her life at Hogwarts" says Eliza Dresang (2002) in "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender" (p. 223). As we have seen in *SS*, Hermione comes to Hogwarts already quoting her textbooks and other books about the magical world. Because she is a good student, Hermione can save herself as well as Ron and Harry from Devil's snare and save the Sorcerer's Stone from Voldemort as she figures out Snape's logic puzzle. Through research and reading, Hermione deduces the monster in the Chamber of Secrets

is a Basilisk and travels through Hogwart's pipes. Because of her obsession for knowledge and learning, in *PoA*, Hermione is allowed to bend time which allows her and Harry to save Sirius and Buckbeak. (Also due to her experiences in *PoA*, Hermione learns moderation when it comes to school and gives up over doing it.) In *GoF*, Hermione helps Harry study for the Triwizard Tournament tasks and basically teaches him "accio," "impedimenta" and "reducto," spells which help him get past a dragon, escape from Voldemort and battle Death Eaters in subsequent books. "Hermione, I need to learn how to do a Summoning Charm properly by tomorrow afternoon" says Harry (Rowling, 2000, *GoF*, p. 345). Hermione also figures out how to silence Rita Skeeter. Because Hermione has learned the importance of knowledge, and that it's not just for school itself, she starts the DA (Dumbledore's Army) to fight Voldemort and his Death Eaters in *OotP*. In *H-BP*, Hermione gives Harry good advice. She warns him about using unknown spells, and tells him how best to persuade Slughorn. Her advice is not always followed, but it turns out she is right more often than not. It appears, in *H-BP*, that Hermione is wrong about Snape, but it turns out she is right in the end. In *DH*, Hermione really takes charge and directs their mission. Her greater knowledge of spells makes Harry and Ron rely on her more. She is the one who helps them escape from Death Eaters at the wedding, at the Ministry, Godric's Hallow, the Lovegood's and almost from the snatchers. Because of her knowledge of ancient runes and her love of reading, she uncovers the mystery of the deathly hallows.

Early on, Hermione is that anxious, annoying know-it-all. "She must've noticed she's got no friends," Ron says (Rowling, 1997, *SS*, p. 172). What Hermione learns at Hogwarts is social knowledge. She learns how to interact with people and what it means to be a friend. "Hermione had become a bit more relaxed about breaking rules since Harry and Ron had saved her from the mountain troll, and she was much nicer for it" (Rowling, 1997, *SS*, p. 181). She also learns greater critical thinking. She realizes there is more than one way to learn. When attempting to rescue the Sorcerer's stone she says to Harry: "Books! And cleverness! There are more important things—friendship and bravery..." (Rowling, 1997, *SS*, p. 287). What's important to note here, is that she doesn't abandon books. Oh no, and occasionally she still has an over-reliance on the "approved text," as we see in Professor Slughorn's class when she struggles to make the Draught of Living Death. "No, no, the book says counterclockwise!" (Rowling, 2005, *H-BP* p. 191). But for the most part, she uses books more appropriately as a tool for knowledge. It is significant that Hermione disagrees with the author of the textbook in professor Umbridge's class (Rowling, 2003, *OotP*, p. 317). As Hermione's knowledge and skills grow, she becomes more relaxed about proving it.

Ruthann Mayes-Elma (2006) in *Females and Harry Potter: Not all that Empowering* has a different interpretation of the same scene towards the end of *SS*. She says, "Hermione has struggled and worked for everything she has gotten, but when the boy

(her master) praises her, she almost regresses and quickly, without even thinking, puts him back up on the pedestal from where he had climbed down, where society has told girls that boys should be" (p. 91). One could get this interpretation if one took the scene out of context and disregarded Hermione's "hero's journey," to use Joseph Campbell's (1968) term from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell says heroes don't begin strong; they must go through tasks to learn strength. Like a good fairy tale hero or new female superhero, Hemione is flawed; her over-reliance on books, annoying people to prove she is smart, shows her uncertainty and fear. The adventure she embarks on and the experience she gains teaches her a lesson (Harry doesn't teach it). After all, doesn't she go on to the next scene, once again using her intelligence to figure out Snape's potions ("logic") puzzle? Her uncertainty about her intelligence has gone away, and her fear about fitting in resolved when she has taken part in winning the house cup.

Hermione is allowed to be just who she is, which is smart. Harry says of Hermione: "she's the best in our year" (Rowling, 2005, *H-BP*, p. 70). In the last book, *DH*, after escaping Death Eaters at Xenophilius Lovegood's house, Harry and Ron say: "'You're a genius,' Ron repeated, looking awed. 'Yeah, you are Hermione,' agreed Harry fervently. 'I don't know what we'd do without you'" (p. 425). Hermione is a power fantasy not only because she is smart; she is also being herself. As my niece said, "she speaks out," even if that means being different. One of my all time favorite lines is in *H-BP*, when Harry "whiled away the time until breakfast by reading his copy of *Advanced Potion-Making*. He did not usually lie in bed reading his textbooks; that sort of behavior, as Ron rightly said, was indecent in anybody except Hermione, who was simply weird that way" (p. 238). Hermione is different; she is very smart and therefore very powerful and Hermione is accepted. She is not only accepted; she is needed because the world would not be saved without her.

Problems with the New Female Super Hero

While the new female superheroes showed girls they could be powerful too, they came with some extra baggage—but not a whole lot of clothes! "The Tomb Raider game became a huge hit on the strength of it's underdressed, gun-packing female adventurer, Lara Croft..." (Jones, 2002, p. 150). On one hand, this can be seen as part of girl power, right? A girl can be powerful and still have girl parts, and like girly things. They don't have to emulate a man. Jones (2002) says, that girls want power and equality but they don't want to give up being girls. He writes: "they want to go on developing their identities as girls at the same time, which in grade school requires that they keep heir separate girl culture intact. They may not have their life agendas mapped out yet, but in

fantasy, they know that they want to step into a world of power and equality but still bring with them the qualities that they've come to understand as feminine" (p. 91).

Concern enters the picture, however, when the physical attributes become the focus of power. Jones (2002) mentions a developmental psychologist who watches Buffy with her daughter. "She wonders what that tells them about the need to be sexy in order to be powerful. Is it reinforcing the idea that girls can't be powerful, cool, admirable, unless they also look and dress like cover girls?" (p. 152). One could argue appearance is important for male superheroes too. They need to be tall, extremely muscular, and a strong square jaw doesn't hurt either. Is this objectification or symbolism? It is both; the male superhero is an object and symbol of strength, however, he is not a sex symbol, at least not entirely. The new female superheroes have muscles and curves; some have no muscles, just a lot of curves. Jones (2002) says, "The linking of sexuality and power disturbs us; we don't want our young girls thinking that they have to make themselves into sexual objects in order to be powerful, nor girls thinking that they're less potent because they don't fit a physical ideal, nor boys objectifying girls sexually and dismissing their other strengths" (p. 152). Hermione has other strengths.

The character of Hermione sidesteps those problems accompanying the new female superhero because firstly, her "superpower" is magical ability, the source of which is knowledge and skill. Secondly, she is a well-rounded fictional character allowed to develop over seven books. Hermione can be more like a real person: well, an exaggerated, fictional, real person. Video game characters or comic book characters are mostly visual, therefore physical appearance is more important. Physical appearance is symbolic and often a short cut through a lot of exposition and dialogue. For example, it is easy to see that Superman, large and muscular, is strong and therefore powerful. In short, sketchy fairy tales, the young girl in rags is beautiful, signifying her beauty inside as well as out, and therefore her value as a person (and often her right to be elevated to the status of princess).

Hermione is, in fact, attractive. While she had the normal awkward looks at eleven, by the time she is fourteen, she is pretty, when she wants to be, as Harry discovers at the Yule ball. She is described as "a pretty girl in blue robes." Her hair is "sleek" and "elegant" and "she was holding herself differently, somehow—or maybe it was merely the absence of the twenty or so books she usually had slung over her back" (Rowling, 2000, *GoF*, pp. 413–414). But attractiveness doesn't define Hermione at all. It's not her strength—those twenty books are. And Hermione doesn't spend too much time worrying about her looks. The day after the ball, "Hermione's hair was bushy again; she confessed to Harry that she had used liberal amounts of Sleekeazy's Hair Potion on it for the ball, "but it's way too much bother to do every day," she said matter-of-factly" (Rowling, 2000, *GoF*, p. 433). It is interesting to note that in the first season of *Buffy:*

The Vampire Slayer, Buffy dons short mini shirts and push-up bras, yet in subsequent seasons she wears jeans and sweaters as her character is better established and valued by fans. It could be that Hermione is just what girls are looking for in a new female superhero: someone who is attractive but develops other strengths besides that.

Granger and Gender

Even in the criticism that claims the *Harry Potter* series is sexist, anti-feminist, conventional and stereotypical (Zipes, 2001; Mayes-Elma, 2006; Heilman & Donaldson, 2009; Dresang, 2002; Kellner 2006), most still point out that Hermione is the most empowered female character in the books. While Mayes-Elma (2006) overall criticizes the conventional gender roles in the *Harry Potter* series, she says,

> The character who was coded most frequently with identity-attitude was Hermione. She showed the ability to define one's own goals (Kabeer, 1999), the ability to make decisions (Kabeer, 1999; May 1992), and the belief that she could influence someone.... In *Sorcerer's Stone* when Hermione is convinced Snape is jinxing Harry's broom, instead of sitting back and watching, Hermione springs into action [pp. 78–79].

Hermione springing into action might just illustrate the lesson Hermione articulates later that books aren't everything. Theory is good, but action is needed to put theory into practice if one wants to change the world. Still, Hermione cries, squeaks and shrieks, as do many of the other female characters (Dresang, 2002; Heilman & Donaldson 2009). These verbs might denote weakness, but could this also be the greater emotional range Jones (2002) was talking about? Hermione can be both weak and strong; she shows confidence, but also needs assurance; she musters steely nerves, but cries too. Dresang (2002) says she displays power, but in a traditional way: she is good at school. However, let us not forget our history. Considering girls "good at school" is a relatively new concept. Educating girls was once considered a waste of time and money, and even dangerous by some. We are reminded that this is still the case today by the *New York Times* article "Afghan Girls, Scarred by Acid, Defy Terror, Embracing school" where is was reported that Shamsia Husseini and eleven other girls plus four teachers were sprayed with acid by "three pairs of men on motorcycles ... circling the school" (Filkins, 2009). Rather than creating a non-sexist, completely fantastical realm, Rowling has chosen to create a character like Hermione who challenges the status quo. There can be no better example of this than Hermione's campaign to help the house elves. Even when facing resistance and ridicule, she doesn't back down, and it turns out she is right. What more could you ask for in a hero? If Hermione's world were already

perfect, if *she* was already perfect, what would be the challenge to over come? What lessons learned, or feeling of power achieved?

Not Ministry Approved

I'll agree with the critics that there is much in Harry Potter's world that is traditional and conventional and little that is alien to our world, but that is precisely why it is, and can operate for readers, similar to a fairy tale. Fairy tales are staged in the hazy, sketchy land of Far, Far Away so as to distance the events and emotions taking place from readers. At the same time, they act out our own ideas and emotions. To satisfy some critics, Rowling would have to have created a world that was nothing like what she grew up with or sees today, but she didn't. What she did do sits firmly in the genre of "contemporary fantasy" (sometimes called "urban fantasy") set in the present day real world, but includes magical elements or magical creatures. The wizarding world occurs all around us, Rowling explains, but we muggles can't (or won't) see it. The characters in the books are caricatures (exaggerated likenesses), not stereotypes, Dresang (2002) explains. This is not unlike J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings*, who created the shire and populated it with creatures we could smile and shake our heads at, recognizing our own foibles in them even though they are half our size with furry feet. Rowling has said in various interviews that the world she has created in her books is reflecting what she has experienced. Therefore, I agree with Dresang (2002) when she says Rowling "reflects a patriarchal, hierarchical world ... the social structure of this magical world as it relates to gender is closer to reality than it is to a vision of a better world" (p. 238). Unlike the Mirror of Erised in *SS*, these types of books do not reflect whatever we want, rather they reflect back to us what we are. This makes fertile ground for criticism and analysis, and it is important to do this analysis as it opens up ideas and takes us to new places. Remember, when we *externalize*, it is easier to talk about it.

There are plenty of children and adults who are not the least bit interested in *Harry Potter*, as Zipes reminds us in *Sticks and Stones* (p. 185). Still, millions of fans have read the books over and over and share thoughts about them via, websites, chat rooms, classrooms and even in scholarly essays. Readers bring their own ideas to the text and use it for their own purposes. For girls, those problems could include trying to negotiate power in a patriarchal world. Or, how does one gain friends without losing one's voice? Hermione can be a useful power fantasy. Cashdan (1999) sums it up nicely when he writes: "the initial attraction of a fairy tale may lie in its ability to enchant and entertain, its lasting value lies in its power to help children deal with the internal conflicts they face in the course of growing up" (p. 10). Let me add that I believe growing up is a life long process.

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Hermione as Activist

From Teenage Witch to Social Activist

Hermione Granger as Female Locus[1]

WILLIAM V. THOMPSON

In *PS* (1997), after she solves Professor Snape's potions puzzle, Hermione throws her arms around Harry in a fit of emotion: "'Harry—you're a great wizard, you know. ... Me! ... Books! And cleverness! There are more important things—friendship and bravery" (p. 208). Hermione's self-deprecating send-off as Harry is about to walk through the black fire to meet Lord Voldemort undercuts her own role in solving the mystery of the Philosopher's Stone, but it also stands as an acknowledgement of what has brought the Trio to this point in their quest. Hermione's ability to solve the potions puzzle is only one of many examples Throughout J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series wherein she uses reason and logic as a means of helping the Trio into and out of dangerous situations. However, Hermione's abilities are not limited to her propensity to think logically. Of the three, Hermione is the most skilled at magic. She is able to plan and to follow through, a characteristic that functions as a counterpoint to Harry's headlong nature, such as in the rescue mission to London in order to save Sirius Black in *OotP* (2004). Moreover, Hermione has the clarity of mind to recognize institutional and social injustice in the form of house-elf enslavement and to understand the racism that forms the core of the corruption in the Wizarding World

As contemporary children's and teen fantasy, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books are a multi-faceted series. They are school stories, they are mysteries, and they are heroic quests; the series can be read as archetypal fantasy, as socially constructed fantasy, or in terms of gender and gender relations. It is the character of Hermione that informs each of these dimensions of the series in more ways than any other, even Harry. She is the brainiac member of the Trio who enables Ron and Harry to pass their exams; she is the Sherlock to Harry's Watson; she is the voice of reason, the voice of logic, and the voice of social justice. She is the contemporary, teenage witch who informs, interacts with, and undercuts the archetypal, the mythological, and the social dimensions of the series. I want to offer a reading of Hermione Granger as the girl witch who forms the female locus for this largely conventional fantasy. As a central character in an archetypally based, heroic fantasy, Hermione brings a contemporary, social dimension to Rowling's series that helps to move it more fully into the twenty-first century, while keeping it grounded in the long tradition of British fantasy for children.

The figure of Hermione is that character that turns J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series from conventional fantasy into a series that both challenges normative assumptions of the genre and finds a fuller expression of female power and female agency. Some critics see Hermione as a somewhat problematic feminist character for the series, but properly speaking Hermione is the brainiac, full-blown girl witch who challenges gender stereotypes, normative assumptions around equality in the Wizarding World, and the heroic conventions of literary fantasy.

Hermione's contributions to Harry's quest to destroy Lord Voldemort are vital, particularly in *DH* (2007), but throughout the series Hermione serves the function of both social commentator and gender cop. She keeps Ron and Harry on track during exams, and she is more skilled with magic than anyone in her year at Hogwarts. Moreover, the list of her contributions to the central adventure in each book is notable. She solves Snape's potions puzzle in *PS*(1997), she brews the polyjuice potion in *CoS* (1998), she uses the time turner to rescue Buckbeak and Sirius Black in *PoA* (1999), and she teaches Harry the summoning charm during the first task of the Triwizard tournament in *GoF* (2001). Coming from the first four books in the series, these examples represent only the most obvious of Hermione's contributions. The single book in the series in which Hermione is removed from the main action of the text in any significant way is *CoS* (1998). Hermione is first partially transformed into a cat from taking the polyjuice potion, and she remains in the hospital wing for nearly two months. She is later petrified by the Basilisk, after which she does not appear again until Harry destroys Tom Riddle's diary and Madam Pomfrey restores the petrified students with the Mandrake potion. Nonetheless, Hermione is never silenced, even while she lies petrified in the hospital wing. Harry and Ron discover a page torn from a library book clutched in her petrified fist. Just as Hermione's bookishness enables the Trio to discover the identity of Nicolas Flamel, her library research gives Harry the information he needs to find the Chamber of Secrets. They are able to both learn the nature of the monster from the chamber and guess Moaning Myrtle's bathroom as the secret entrance to the chamber. In the fourth and fifth books of the series, Hermione forces Ron and Harry to recognize house-elf enslavement, Wizarding entitlement, and the corruption in the Wizarding World. Finally, Hermione's knowledge and skill with magic is what enables the search for the horcruxes in *DH* (2007), a quest that would have been futile without Hermione's magical help.

In spite of having such a central part in the series, reading Hermione's place in the *Harry Potter* books generates a number of challenges. To begin, approaching a conventional fantasy in terms of female power and agency requires unpacking the genre to some degree in order to find a place for a character such as Hermione. The series is conventional literary fantasy, one in which good meets evil and good prevails; moreover, such conventional fantasy tends toward male-centeredness, which leaves

little room for active female characters. As a genre, therefore, fantasy is often one that is patriarchal in nature, reinforcing white, middle class values in alignment with male hegemonic thinking.

According to Margery Hourihan (1997) in *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, the hero story that dominates western literature and culture is that story that most informs literary fantasy. It consistently inscribes white, hegemonic values in its representation of the figure of the hero. The hero' story, Hourihan argues, constitutes a series of binaries, in which the hero is set in opposition to both women and the environment: women become a deviant expression of sexuality and the other, while the natural world becomes the physical space the hero must conquer and subdue. Moreover, she says that the "essence of the hero's masculinity is his assertion of control over himself, his environment and his world" (p. 69). Hourihan's (1997) study comes too early to comment directly on the *Harry Potter* series, but it does comment on those series that form the most direct predecessors to Rowling, such as C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Both Lewis and Tolkien are representative of twentieth-century British fantasy: such texts tend to privilege white, male characters, while marginalizing both women and characters of color and polarizing the depiction of good and evil. Rowling's series does much less to marginalize such characters. Nonetheless, female characters such as Hermione or Ginny Weasley, or characters of color such as Angelina Johnson or Dean Thomas, invariably take a more subordinate role in relation to Harry as the focalizing character of the series.

Hourihan's discussion of the traditional hero and his quest is one that responds to earlier approaches to the hero in terms of both fantasy and the folktale. What Marshall Tymn, Kenneth Zahorsky, and Robert Boyr (1979) classify as high or heroic fantasy is that fantasy in which the hero ventures forth on a quest in a secondary world, a term denoting the imaginary worlds of fantasy first coined by J.R.R. Tolkien (1966) in his 1937 essay "On Faerie Stories" (p. 60). In high or heroic fantasy, the language of the hero is often elevated or archaic, and he is without question the moral centre of the text in opposition to the forces of evil: "The worlds of high fantasy are secondary worlds, ... and they manifest a consistent order explainable in terms of the supernatural ... or in terms of the less definable (but still recognizable) magical powers of faerie" (Tymn, Zahorski, and Boyers, p. 6). Apart from this element of a consistent order, the basic structure of the quest that lies at the heart of fantasy literature comes from what Northrop Frye (1976) calls the quest-romance. In *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, Frye argues that the quest-romance is central to the basic structure of the hero story and represents the most persistent element of the romance that manifests from genre to genre and from century to century: "Twentieth-century romance got a new lease of fashion after the mid-fifties, with the success of Tolkien and the rise

of what is generally called science fiction" (Frye, p. 5). He goes on to explain that the romance form tends to re-invent itself with each successive century, but that the conservative nature of the genre helps to set it apart as one that is both consistent and stable.

Finally, the structure of the romance as it expresses itself through fantasy is further grounded in Joseph Campbell's (1949) hero of the monomyth in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell's text discusses folk and fairy tales from a variety of cultural traditions and uses stories from those traditions to establish the monomyth, an admittedly male-centred model for the journey of the archetypal hero. The monomyth constitutes a three-part structure—the separation, initiation, and return—in which the hero separates from what Campbell (1949) calls the world of common day, encounters various tests in the world of the supernatural, and returns home with the boon that will reshape his world (Campbell, pp. 36–37). In the light of Margery Hourihan's (1997) comments on the hero story, Campbell's (1949) hero becomes a cultural force that simply re-inscribes heteronormative values and heteronormative desires. Nonetheless, such a tradition is that tradition out of which the *Harry Potter* series emerges and one that in part defines the overall trajectory of the series.

Establishing the heteronormative and largely patriarchal nature of the fantasy tradition invariably serves to problematize a reading of such a character as Hermione. How can such a girl character be anything but subject to the hero of such a story? How can she be anything but marginalized as other or sexual deviant? In spite of the often prescriptive nature of the genre, Hermione is able to subvert the heroic tradition in a variety of ways. Clearly not satisfied with the limitations of the genre in which she was writing, Rowling creates a character in Hermione that operates in such a way to both resist and undercut the overarching limitations of heroic fantasy.

In her approach to Hermione as a feminist character in "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender," Eliza T. Dresang (2002) suggests a way to understand Hermione's character that comes from J.K. Rowling herself. Hermione's character, according to Dresang, walks a line between caricature and stereotype, in which Rowling writes Hermione as a caricature of herself at the same age. As a caricature, Hermione, according to Dresang (2002), still manages to constitute an empowering character for girls: "...it is possible for a character presented through a caricature to be empowered in her role, while it is possible for a stereotypic character to be thus empowered only if she consciously subverts the stereotype" (Dresang, p. 221). Hermione seems to do both. Dresang's explanation of Rowling's intention with respect to Hermione is helpful in understanding her potential for empowerment, but the character of Hermione is not the only place in which Rowling demonstrates her flair for caricature. More minor characters such as Mundungus Fletcher—the Fagan-like sneak thief who steals the

locket containing one of Voldemort's horcruxes—and Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge—the pompous politician who sets himself against Harry and Dumbledore—are both caricatures in their own right. Dresang (2002) asserts that in spite of Rowling's best efforts, she only partially succeeds in maintaining Hermione as a caricature of herself at the same age, as Hermione's character "bleeds over into a stereotype of girls Hermione's age" (p. 221). Rowling's Dickensian talent for reproducing caricature in no way takes away from Dresang's comments on Hermione; nonetheless, Hermione is much less bound by either caricature or stereotype than any other in the series, even Harry.

The flexibility that Rowling imparts to her character further enables Hermione to step outside stereotypical lines and act according to her own understanding of events, and while Dresang's (2002) comments are certainly just, they do not fully take into account the varied nature of Hermione's actions. For one, it is worth bearing in mind that Hermione is not the only character in the seven books who is subject to stereotyping. Ron's thoughtless nature as the youngest of six sons bleeds into a gender stereotype as fully as Hermione's or any other character in the series. According to Hermione herself, Ron is "'the most insensitive wart I have ever had the misfortune to meet,'" and has "'the emotional range of a teaspoon'" (Rowling, *OotP*, p. 405). If Hermione sometimes responds stereotypically, such as in her terrified encounter with the troll in the girls toilet (*PS*, p. 121), she compensates for such lapses with clear thinking and bravery, as in her ruse to draw Dolores Umbridge into the forest with the promise of handing over Dumbledore's weapon, or later as the members of the D.A. descend on the ministry to save Sirius Black in *OotP (2004)*.

In spite of her occasional lapse into stereotype, Hermione demonstrates a level of agency that is equal to and often exceeds that of Harry or the other male characters in the series. In *Females in Harry Potter: Not All that Empowering*, Ruthann Mayse-Elma (2006) sees Hermione as one of several female characters who exhibits various degrees of agency throughout the series. As her title suggests, Mayes-Elma (2006) does not consider the females of the series to have the ability to exhibit agency to the same degree as characters such as Harry; however, her study only extends to *PS*(1997), which necessarily limits her discussion of the important female characters in the series. Judging Hermione as a female character with limited agency solely based on *PS* (1997) only yields so much. On the other hand, Mayes-Elma's comments on Hermione are helpful in determining the level of agency Hermione contributes at the beginning of the series.

In her discussion of female characters in *PS* (1997), Mayes-Elma (2006) conflates identity and authenticity as being central to her discussion of agency. She cites two important examples of Hermione's efforts to establish agency that both express her identity and lend a degree of authenticity to her character. Hermione's desire to achieve

exemplary grades, for example, demonstrates her level of agency within the text: "...she studies day and night and in the end she does indeed accomplish her goal. A second important goal of Hermione's is to find out who Nicolas Flamel was" (Mayes-Elma, p. 79). Mayes-Elma (2006) points out that Hermione spends hours searching the library for the identity of Nicholas Flammel, and while it is true that Hermione discovers the information to explain Flamel's identity, it is in fact Harry who discovers the name on the back of a chocolate frog card, a point that serves to underscore the cooperative and often interdependent relationship shared by Harry and Hermione rather than giving credit for the discovery either way. In this case, Hermione is the Sherlock to Harry's Watson. Ron and Harry's puzzlement upon her revelation that Flamel is the maker of the philosopher's stone earns them Hermione's exasperated response, "'Oh honestly, don't you two read?'" (*PS*, p. 161), reinforcing Hermione's superiority as the brainiac member of the Trio.

As a second and more interesting example of Hermione's agency, Mayes-Elma (2006) cites Hermione's efforts to break what she believes to be Professor Snapes curse to knock Harry off his broom during the first quidditch match of the series. What Hermione does not know is that snape is actually attempting to save Harry from Professor Quirrell, and Hermione unwittingly breaks the spell, even as she is attempting to stop Snape: "Hermione had fought her way across to the stand where Snape stood and was now racing along the row behind him; she didn't even stop to say sorry as she knocked Professor Quirrell head first into the row in front" (p. 141). Not only is Hermione acting alone and, if briefly, as the focalizing character, she is interfering with a teacher, which suggests at least as much pluck as either Ron or Harry have demonstrated to this point in the series.

While Mayes-Elma's (2006) feminist deconstruction of Hermione's character identifies ways in which Hermione operates within a patriarchal structure, she asserts herself to a much greater degree throughout the remainder of the series. Dividing the series into three distinct sections not only shows the development in Hermione's character, but also the degree of agency and empowerment she exhibits over the course of the seven books. *GoF* (2001) is the book that demarcates the series, not only because it sees the rise of Voldemort at its end, but because it also marks the shift in Hermione's character from brainiac to social activist and teenage witch. The first three books of the series have Hermione operating as the brains of the Trio. In *PS* (1997), she leads the search for Nicolas Flamel, she aids Harry in getting Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback to the top of the Astronomy Tower, and she solves Snape's potions puzzle. Despite the fact that Hermione is petrified in *CoS* (1998) for the last two months of the school year, her efforts in the library are what aid Harry and Ron in determining that a basilisk is the monster loose in the school. Similarly, in *PoA* (1999), it is Hermione who understands Dumbledore's cryptic instructions in the hospital wing and knows to use the time-turner

in order to save both Buckbeak and Sirius. It is not until *GoF* (2001) that Hermione moves from brainiac to social activist and teenage witch. The treatment of Winky by Bartimus Crouch at the World Cup turns Hermione into an outraged activist and is what inspires her to found S.P.E.W., the Society for the Preservation of Elfish Welfare. The fourth book in the series also sees Hermione as her own fairy god mother during the Yule Ball, while books five and six have Hermione become something of a gender cop in response to Ron and Harry's fumbling attempts to understand girls. *DH* (2007) represents the third section of Hermione's development, in which her spell-casting abilities is what makes the quest for the horcruxes even possible.

Despite their contributions to reading female agency in the series, feminist readings of Hermione do not entirely take into account her flexibility as a character. Scholars such as Dresang (2002) and Mayes-Elma (2006) choose to see Hermione as a marginalized female within a patriarchal fantasy. Rowling is certainly writing within a genre that privileges the white, male hero, but Hermione actively undercuts such conventions. For example, she has to teach Harry a summoning charm as his only defence against the Hungarian Horntail during the first task of the Triwizard Tournament. "'Hermione, I need you to help me," (*GoF*, p. 302), says Harry to Hermione, once he realizes that his Firebolt is the only thing that will save him against the dragon. The tasks in the Triwizard Tournament are meant to test skill in magic, bravery, and ingenuity. Most telling is Harry's recognition that he needs help from Hermione, and that such a reliance is never emasculating.

Hermione, therefore, has more flexibility and demonstrates more agency than most other characters in the series. Harry is a contemporized variation of the traditional hero, and his choices remain both bound and defined by that role. The final choice he does make with respect to Voldemort and the prophecy, he makes at least as much out of defiance as anything else. The line from the prophecy that haunts Harry by the end of *OotP* (2004) is "Either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives" (p. 741). Dumbledore in *H-BP* (2006) insists that Harry has a choice—whatever the prophecy- says—and it takes a concerted effort on Harry's part to recognize his own agency with respect to a fate that appears inevitable: "It was, he thought, the difference between being dragged into the arena to face a battle to the death and walking into the arena with your head held high" (*OotP*, p. 479). Unlike Harry, Hermione does not have to justify or convince herself of her own agency; she has it throughout the series, right from her first appearance on the Hogwarts Express as the girl with the "bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth" (*PS*, p. 79).

Just as the series fits within the genre of conventional fantasy, the first three books further fit within the tradition of the British school story, which provides both the

latitude for rule-breaking and the scope for the mysteries that characterize *PS*(1997), *CoS* (1998), and *PoA* (1999). Both Karen Manner Smith (2003) and David K. Steege (2002) comment on the ways in which the Harry Potter series reflect the tradition of the boarding school story. Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days* is a literary touchstone for this tradition, and the elements of the school story work to inform all of the adventures at Hogwarts.

According to Manner Smith (2003) in "Harry Potter's Schooldays: J.K. Rowling and the British Boarding School Novel," the school story is one that establishes itself early in the nineteenth century, even before the publication of *Tom Brown's School Days* in 1857. The school story is characterized by a variety of elements, all for the purpose of having a particular and educational effect on readers: almost all British school stories celebrate the culture of the public schools and other boarding schools, and they usually share common themes related to the virtues of chivalry, decency, honor, sportsmanship, and loyalty (p. 73). Other elements of the school story include relationships between students and teachers, the isolation of those students who cannot fit within the school, the presence of bullies, as well as various moral dilemmas to which the hero is subject (p. 74). The heroes and heroines of the school story frequently, according to Manner Smith, find themselves wrongly or unjustly accused and punished for the infraction of school rules, often promoted within the school hierarchy, and frequently opposed to school bullies. Finally, the school story often crosses genres into mystery or detective fiction, in which the heroes save house or school honor and even home and country from a variety of enemies (pp. 74–76).

David K. Steege (2002) in "Harry Potter, Tom Brown, and the British School Story" draws similar connections between the series and the broader tradition of the school story, but finds particular parallels between Harry and Tom Brown from Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days*, from Harry and Tom's anxious excitement over entering the school and their loyalty to their respective houses to their relationship with a school bully and an older mentor. While it seems clear that Rowling's series represents a tribute to the tradition of the school story, Steege suggests that finally, "the *Harry Potter* novels have one more trait in common with many other public school novels ... a tradition of providing a moral tale as well as a ripping good yarn" (Steege, p. 151).

All but the final book in the *Harry Potter* series fit within the parameters of the school story. Each is structured according to the school year, with the journey on the Hogwarts Express, Halloween, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays, and exams forming the major structural points throughout the year. The structure of the school year becomes less dominant and more integrated into the main action of the series by *GoF* (2001): Halloween is off-set by the selection of school champions for the Triwizard Tournament, Christmas by the Yule Ball, and exams by the third task, in which Harry is

transported to a graveyard where Lord Voldemort regains his body and he and Harry confront one another for the second time. Those books most structurally regulated by the elements of the school story then are the first three in the series, while *GoF* (2001), *OotP* (2004), and *H-BP* (2006) are dominated more fully by the main action of the book, such as the Triwizard Tournament, the tyranny of Dolores Umbridge, and Harry and Dumbledore's investigation into the horcruxes. Interestingly enough, Hermione and Ron become prefects in *OotP* (2004), while Harry, the "Boy Who Lived" and hero of the series, is not formally part of the hierarchy of the school until he is made quidditch captain in *H-BP* (2006).

Apart from the books as ripping good yarns, the two elements of the school story that figure most prominently into the first three books of the series are the hero's relationship with a companion and the element of mystery or the detective novel. As Manners Smith (2003) suggests, Harry and Ron's friendship, from the moment they meet on the Hogwarts Express, fits the profile of the hero and his school companion: "Adding a girl to the classic boys' school friendship system is Rowling's innovation" (Manner Smith, p. 75). It is Hermione's presence then that sets Rowling's series apart as a school story, representing the innovation that contemporizes the series and giving Hermione the degree of agency she maintains until the end of the series.

Hermione completes the triumvirate, but she is never a third wheel. Not until the incident with the troll in *PS* (1997) does Hermione join Harry and Ron, but after this point they are inseparable. Harry and Ron establish themselves as rule-breakers during the midnight duel, in which Draco Malfoy lures them into breaking curfew in order to join him in the Trophy Room at midnight. Malfoy has no intention of fighting Harry, and Harry and Ron, in the company of both Hermione and Neville Longbottom, are first nearly caught out of bounds by Argus Filch the caretaker and then near to being eaten by Fluffy, Hagrid's three-headed dog, that has been set to guard the trap door leading to the Philosopher's Stone. Being almost killed and, according to Hermione, "'or worse, expelled'" (p. 120) fails to detract from Harry and Ron's glowing sense of their first real adventure at the school: "by next morning Harry and Ron thought that meeting the three-headed dog had been an excellent adventure and they were quite keen to have another one" (p. 120). As rule breaking and school misdemeanours are an integral part of the school story, it seems appropriate that her lie to Professor McGonigall during the incident with the troll serves as Hermione's indoctrination into the Trio: "'I went looking for the troll because I—I thought I could deal with it on my own—you know, because I've read all about them'" (p. 130). Here, as in so many other places in the series, Hermione justifies her actions with what she has learned from books—learning and scholarship being particularly tied up with Hermione's agency—the adventure of the troll thus bringing the three together, while Hermione's lie firmly fixing their relationship for the remainder of the series.

Hermione's role as the brainiac member of the Trio continues throughout both *CoS* (1998) and *PoA* (1999). It is in *CoS* (1998) that Hermione exercises a more intensified level of agency, motivated by her Muggle-Born status, which also makes her a target for the monster from the Chamber of Secrets. Being marginalized further only spurs Hermione onto greater acts of rebellion. During Harry's first quidditch practice of the year, Malfoy calls Hermione a "'filthy little mudblood'" (*CoS*, p. 86), which introduces an element of racism into the series and further marginalizes Hermione within the Wizarding World. Harry's first encounter with Malfoy in *PS* (1997) brings a particular form of class consciousness to the series. However, Malfoy's insistence that "'some Wizarding families are much better than others'" (p. 81) is nothing compared with his vindictive slur against Hermione in *CoS* (1998). In "Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision of J.K. Rowling's Fairy Tales," Elaine Ostry (2003) calls this increasing emphasis on racism and classism in the series "the modern liberal version of the fairy-tale battle between good and evil" (Ostry, p. 92). What begins largely as classism becomes racism by the end of the series. It is fully realized in *DH* (2007) as the Muggle-Born Registration Commission under control of Dolores Umbridge, but its introduction here positions Hermione as a member of a persecuted and vulnerable class of students within the school. Her ability to recognize such persecution, according to Jackie C. Horne in "Harry and the Other: Answering the Race question in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*" (2010), eventually leads her to take a political and social justice approach to the treatment of house-elves in *GoF* (2004). Horne (2010) asserts that Rowling's treatment of Hermione's campaign for elf rights is ambiguous, given the negative and often dismissive reaction from other characters in the series, but "Hermione's awakening begins with a recognition of institutional racism" (Horne, p. 84), which further points to the corruption at the heart of the Wizarding World.

It is Hermione's sense of vulnerability and persecution that spurs her to action in the Trio's quest to discover the nature of the Chamber of Secrets. She devises the plan to use polyjuice potion in order that the Trio can infiltrate the Slytherin common room, but both Ron and Harry are uncharacteristically daunted by the task: "'Well, if you two are going to chicken out, fine ... I don't want to break rules you know. I think threatening Muggle-Borns is far worse than brewing up a difficult potion'" (*CoS*, p. 125). Hermione's scathing response to Ron and Harry's reluctance has the effect of shaming the boys into cooperating. Hermione identifies herself here as a rule-breaker, which as Manner Smith (2003) suggests is an element of a predominantly boy's genre. The roles at this point are interestingly reversed. In *PS* (1997), Harry insists on going through the trap door, in spite of Hermione's admonition that Harry will be expelled: "'There won't be any Hogwarts to get expelled from! He[Voldemort]'ll flatten it'" (*PS*, 197). Hermione effectively takes up Harry's cry to protect the school, in this case Muggle-Borns, a move which further anticipates her somewhat problematic response to elf

rights in *GoF* (2001), and her more fulsome response to the persecution of muggle-borns in DH (2007). Hermione steals the ingredients for the polyjuice potion from Professor Snape's office and brews the potion in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom, but interestingly does not join Ron and Harry in their investigation of Malfoy, and neither does she accompany them into the chamber at the end of the book.

In spite of her absence, Hermione is never silenced. Lying petrified in the hospital wing she still solves the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets: Ron and Harry find the page from a book clutched in her petrified fist that gives them the clue they need to enter the chamber. The page describes the basilisk and includes the single hand-written word, "Pipes" (*CoS*, 215). Despite her ability to still solve the mystery of the chamber, Hermione's petrifaction at the end of the book seems a rather mixed message. Hermione is absent from the major adventures in the book: the ride in the flying car to Hogwarts, the meeting with the giant spiders in the Forbidden Forest, and the journey down into the chamber. The book privileges the boy's adventure over Hermione's skill, in spite of the fact that Ron and Harry would have never discovered the entrance to the chamber without her.

Hermione is marginalized from the Trio again in *PoA* (1999), this time because she adopts a familiar, the cat Crookshanks, which Ron accuses of eating his rat, Scabbers. What distinguishes the third book in the series is that having a familiar is a developmental marker for Hermione. Hogwarts students receive their introductory letters at the age of eleven: Hermione has a September birthday, which means she turns twelve at the beginning of PS (1997) and fourteen at the beginning of PoA (1999). Having a familiar, even though Hermione treats Crookshanks as a pet, positions her more fully as a witch in the series and operates as a rather oblique manifestation of her developing sexuality. Other students at the school have pets: Harry has Hedwig the owl, Ron has Scabbers the rat, and Neville has Trevor the toad. Nonetheless, the magical nature of Crookshanks reinforces at this point Hermione's position as the savvy girl witch who is no longer a child.

Whether child, girl witch, or young woman, Hermione is still the brainiac. It is Lupin who acknowledges Hermione's intelligence during the scene in the Shrieking Shack in which both Lupin's and Sirius Black's identities come fully to light: "'You're the cleverest witch of your age I have ever met'" (*PoA*, p. 253). Hermione not only works out that Lupin is a werewolf, she later understands Dumbledore's suggestion to use the time turner as the only way to rescue both Sirius and Buckbeak the Hippogriff. It is Ron who is absent during the rescue this time, and Hermione who guides Harry and who reminds him they must not be seen once they are in the past.

Virginia Zimmerman (2009) argues that Rowling places a particular mark on time travel conventions with first Dumbledore's and then Hermione's insistence that she and Harry not be seen in the past. According to Zimmerman (2009), Rowling uses a combination of what she defines as a tensed and tensless universe for her version of time travel in *PoA* (1999): "Not interfering with the course of history is usually the most important rule, but here the integrity of the historical narrative is less important than the perception of reality (Zimmerman, p. 202). Dumbledore *wants* Hermione and Harry to alter the past. The appearance of Harry's patronus even before they go back in time suggests that the past has already been changed, further pointing to the pre-destination paradox in Rowling's representation of time, and further explaining Hermione's concern with the perception of rather than the alterability of the past.

As the series progresses, it is noteworthy that as a character Hermione is criticized for being bossy, a know-it-all, and a Muggle-Born, but not even Ron recognizes Hermione for the girl that she is until *GoF* (2001). As Manner Smith (2003) suggests, Hogwarts is a coeducational school, and boys and girls are given the same opportunities to learn and to excel. Such an egalitarian school undercuts both the conventions of both the boy's school story and fantasy as a genre, as well as a reading of Hermione as a marginalized female character. Transfiguration, one of the most difficult subjects at the school, is taught by a woman, Professor McGonagall. Characters such as Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle can act the part of over-masculinised, swaggering bullies, but it is magical skill that gains recognition from the teachers and Head Master. In this way, Hermione has undercut the nature of traditional fantasy all along, but any further notice of Hermione as a girl who acts like a girl goes unremarked until the fourth book in the series.

The shift from the brainiac to the teenage witch occurs with *GoF* (2001) and *OotP* (2004), in which Hermione is no less the cleverest in her year, but she also becomes the girl witch who is both social activist and gender cop. Hermione creates S.P.E.W. in response to her outrage over the treatment of house-elves, and she recognizes, no less than Dumbledore, that Sirius' treatment of Kreacher is indicative of a particular disregard for house-elves in the Wizarding world, a point that is borne out by the Fountain of Magical Brethren in the Ministry of Magic. According to the fountain, not only house-elves but goblins, centaurs, and witches are subject to the male wizard, who wears an expression of nobility that Harry thinks on his second look is "weak and foolish" (*OotP*, p. 142). The fountain, located in the main hall of the Ministry, not only suggests the patriarchal and heteronormative nature of the Wizarding World but the corruption that lies at its heart. It is, after all, this world of dominance and privilege that gives rise to Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

Hermione's activism and creation of S.P.E.W. is her response to the corruption in the Wizarding World, but it remains problematic. Her social justice approach, according to

Jackie C. Horne (2010), characterizes Hermione's recognition of Wizarding entitlement, but Rachel McCarthy James offers a more cautionary approach to Hermione and her activism, particularly her creation of S.P.E.W. On Her blog *Deeply Problematic*, McCarthy James (2011) suggests that Hermione is equally responsible for reinforcing the oppression of those magical creatures she purports to defend. In Hermione Granger and the Failures of Feminism, McCarthy James (2011) writes: "With S.P.E.W., Hermione participates in the grand feminist tradition of devaluing, disregarding and silencing oppressed classes while centering herself and her opinions on their marginalization" (Tuesday, March 1). Such a comment with respect to S.P.E.W. underscores Hermione's immaturity as an activist. She does operate from a position of privilege with respect to those magical creatures, and she is more concerned with championing the rights of house-elves than she is interested in understanding their atonomy. According to McCarthy James, S.P.E.W. is fundamentally flawed in that any movement for the advancement of oppressed classes "must be centered on and led by members of the oppressed class" (Tuesday, March 1). Perhaps Hermione can be forgiven her zeal because of her relative youth and inexperience. She eventually gives over her enthusiasm for S.P.E.W., and in her defence, Hermione's Muggle-Born status undeniably allows her a particular perspective on Wizarding entitlement that aligns her with Dumbledore and eventually places her in real danger from the Muggle-born Registration Commission in DH (2007).

Apart from her fledgling social awareness, Hermione becomes both a Cinderella character and object of desire for Viktor Krum at the Yule Ball, a point which helps to move the series from young adult to teen literature. The Yule Ball is of course the event that forces the series in this direction, while Ron and Harry's fumbling attempts to find dates for the ball set their relationship with Hermione on a slightly different footing. After four years of adventures, Ron suddenly sees Hermione in a different way: "'Hermione, Neville's right—you *are* a girl!'" (*GoF*, p. 328). Harry is something of a Cinderella character in both PS (1997) and CoS (1998). Forced to cook, clean, and sleepin the cupboard under the stairs, Harry is, according to Katherine Grimes (2002) in "Harry Potter: Fairy Tale Prince, Real boy, and Archetypal Hero," the Cinderella to Petunia Dursley's wicked step-mother (Grimes, p. 95). Hermione, however, is both Cinderella and her own fairy god mother. Harry's recognition of Hermione's transformation on the night of the Yule ball speaks to this two-fold role: "His eyes fell instead on a girl next to Krum. His jaw dropped. It was Hermione" (*GoF*, p. 360). Hermione's done-up hair and dress reveal her as the princess of the ball. Nevertheless, Hermione is clear with Harry that such transformations are not much more than a form of dress-up, and that she has no intention of doing the same thing on a regular basis, which further repositions Hermione's fairy tale transformation within the more mundane context of girls and make-up.

Whether or not Hermione has value as a girl and a brainiac is more fully and more directly answered by Harry in *H-BP* (2006). Harry insists that the mysterious writer of the notations in his potions book is male, while Hermione challenges him on the basis that Harry is reinforcing the stereotype that boys are cleverer than girls: "'How can I have hung round with you for five years and not think girls are clever?'" (*H-BP*, p. 503). Harry's exasperated response underscores Hermione's role as an anchor within the Trio. Teachers such as Lupin and Mad-Eye Moody have commented on Hermione's cleverness to this point, but Harry is the hero of the series, and his acknowledgement speaks to both his friendship with Hermione and those ways in which the series undercuts gender stereotypes.

DH (2007) constitutes the third section of Hermione's development, and has Hermione coming more into her own as a witch and more as an object of desire. Hermione's skill with magic enables the Trio to begin their search for the horcruxes, and her desirability is unlike that of the Yule Ball in which Hermione is the princess for the night. Hermione appears at Bill and Fleur's wedding in a dress and heels but not without her beaded bag, which represents the Trio's salvation once the Death Eaters attack: "She was wearing a floaty, lilac-coloured dress with matching high heels; her hair was sleek and shiny" (p. 119). Hermione is an object of desire for both Ron and for Viktor Krum. Ron is especially possessive with respect to Hermione, seeing Krum as a direct rival. Hermione's desirability is further underscored once she apparates the Trio away from the wedding to Tottenham Court Road, where she is leered at by a group of drunken muggles: "the men on the other side of the road started wolf-whistling at her" (p. 136). Here, Hermione becomes a sexual object in a display of masculine one-up-manship. More poignantly, Hermione's desirability later becomes a test for Ron once he returns to Harry and Hermione in the Forest of Dean. Harry insists that Ron destroy the locket with the Sword of Gryffindor. The Riddle-Harry and Riddle-Hermione that emerge from the horcrux speak directly to Ron's insecurities and his desire for Hermione: "'What have you ever done compared with the Chosen One? What are you, compared with the Boy Who Lived?'" (p. 306–07). The Riddle-Hermione that emerges from the horcrux is both a sexualized and unattainable version of herself—for Ron, an extreme and one-sided variation of her as desirable object.

Her desirability aside, it is Hermione's skill with magic that enables the Trio to search for the horcruxes and hide from the Death Eaters at all. She apparates the Trio away from the wedding, she casts the enchantments that protect their campsites, and she drinks polyjuice potion to impersonate Bellatrix Lestrange when they enter Gringotts to retrieve one of the horcruxes. The connection between Hermione and Bellatrix at this point is striking. Bellatrix is a sado-sexual extreme of the witch. In *The Bitch Is Back: Wicked Women in Literature*, Sarah Appleton Aguiar (2001) comments on the nature of the binary representations of women within Jungian psychology, in which each positive

archetype contains its opposite: "...the 'virgin' reversed becomes the 'whore,' the opposite of the 'goddess' is the 'demon,' ... Each of these negative incarnations may be seen as a variation of the bitch" (p. 17). Bellatrix is clearly the figure of the bitch in opposition to Hermione as the maid. More importantly, Bellatrix is a shadow figure to Hermione just as Voldemort is a shadow figure to Harry. Admittedly Harry is the eighth horcrux, but Hermione has a connection to the older woman because she possesses Bellatrixès wand while impersonating her with polyjuice potion, further emphasized by Harry's response to seeing Hermione after she has taken the potion: "...he could not suppress a shiver of loathing. She was taller than he was, her long, black hair rippling down her back, her heavily lidded eyes disdainful as they rested upon him" (p. 422). Bellatrix later tortures Hermione in Malfoy Manor, furthering a characterization of Bellatrix as the female Voldemort to Hermione as the teenage witch, but nevertheless representing a bond between the two as widely differing versions of female power and female sexuality.

The end of the series belongs to Harry. His decision to sacrifice himself for the sake of his friends and to defeat Lord Voldemort is the final end to Harry's quest, and makes public the private love of his mother that saved him from Voldemort's curse the Halloween he was a year old. Hermione has a part in the Battle of Hogwarts, but her character retreats into the background, just as so many others do as Harry faces Voldemort in the Great Hall. Interestingly enough, it is Luna Lovegood who provides Harry with the opportunity to leave the celebration feast and return to the Head Master's office. Hermione and Ron accompany Harry, just as they have throughout all of the books, their presence re-affirming the closeness of the Trio that fought the troll in PS(1997). Harry is the white, male hero of the series, but Hermione is the girl witch who helps to make it possible. She is the voice of reason and the voice of the oppressed within the Wizarding World. Given the range of literary elements and genres that comprise the series, Hermione is the character who contemporizes and undercuts its traditional components. As part caricature and part stereotype, as both brainiac and teenage witch, Hermione is that character that moves the series out of those conventions of both fantasy and the school story that keep it male-centred, making the series a more cooperative, a more pluralistic, and a new-normative fantasy for the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Page numbering in this piece follows the Canadian editions of the novels.

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Is Hermione Granger the *Real* Chosen One?

TODD S. WATERS

The *Harry Potter* phenomenon continues to enthrall the world, particularly with the second installment of the *Deathly Hallows* films surpassing the elusive billion dollar mark in the worldwide box office. Anticipation for the unveiling of the new *Potter* theme park in Universal Studios was tantamount to the release of any of the final books, and media attention for actors Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson has never been more prevalent. The Harry Potter franchise is, without a doubt, one of the grandest and most controversial in recent history, and as scholars continue to scrutinize and theorize about implications of the series, recurring themes begin to emerge. Hardly an essay or book about the text is published without mention of Harry Potter versus Lord Voldemort. As the central arc to the Potter stories, how can this not be a focal point of academic discourse? Careful scrutiny has also been given to relationships between characters; the analysis of these bonds is another defining attribute of Rowling's work—that these books are about so much more than magic and good versus evil—they are about the establishment, maintenance (and sometimes severance) of relationships. Interactions between the Trio, the Order of the Phoenix, Voldemort and his Death Eaters, Hogwartians, and house-elves and other magical creatures are relevant not only in critical analysis, but in the overall context of the story. Without these relationships (between individuals and, more notably, between different groups of people and magical creatures), the *Potter* books would certainly not have been as meteoric.

Through the analysis of relationships in the text, scholars have deduced that Rowling's incorporation of several types of magical creatures and divisions of wizards is highly symbolic; an analogy for the readers' real world. Like the real world, these groups experience imbalances and systems of oppression, privilege and power. Different groups within the Wizarding world oppress one another, specific individuals are given institutionalized power over others, sects fight over rights to perform specific tasks, and, most importantly, each perpetuates systems within the Wizarding community. Common examples include the enslavement of house-elves, first introduced in *CoS*, elaborated upon in *PoA*, and vastly magnified in *GoF*; the Ministry of Magic interfering with the established systems at Hogwarts in *OotP*; Voldemort's establishment of fear to continue posing an imminent threat on the Wizarding world in *HBP*; and the Dark Lord and Death Eaters' reign over Muggles and wizards alike in *DH* (Rowling, 1998, 2000,

2003, 2005, 2007). These dynamics can be explained by concepts of oppression and power held over others, and more instances are rife throughout the series.

The True Anti-Voldemort

The ways in which the anti-Voldemort movement destabilizes the Dark Lord's power and eventually overthrows the tyranny of the Death Eaters can be inspected through this framework of oppression, power, and privilege. First, however, it is important to illuminate the true antithesis of Voldemort. Common sense would direct the majority of readers to say that the central hero of the tale, Harry, is the obvious choice for leader and vanquisher of evil. As the focal point of the films and the "face" of good, how can Harry not be Voldemort's opposite? If not Potter, then many might turn to Dumbledore as the leader of the front, as "The Only One He Ever Feared," and the single most powerful wizard of his time. But the true anti-Voldemort is not an individual who relies on their abilities as a dueler, nor is it someone who is commonly depicted as the central hero. The true anti-Voldemort is Hermione Granger, the scholar, and most notably, the *organizer*.

Organization is the single most efficient and arguably the *only* effective tactic to use against an established institutionalized power system (Fluxman, 2004). Deep reading textual analysis reveals the ways in which Lord Voldemort oppresses and how Hermione liberates the Wizarding World through the use of coordination. This analysis of Voldemort and Hermione will illuminate Hermione's place as Voldemort's true opposite, *not* Harry Potter.

Studies in Institutional Power, Coercive Force and Coordination

Institutional power and coordination theory suggest that Hermione is Voldemort's true equal; that it is Hermione, *not* Harry, who is the so-called "Chosen One." Institutionalized power leads to the use of coercive force to maintain that power, and coordination theory (Hardin, Heath & Rosen, 1995) can be utilized as a lens with which to examine how Voldemort and Hermione organize to establish power, relieve oppression, and institute liberation.

Institutional Power Engendering the Use of Coercive Force

To adequately demonstrate how coordination theory applies to both Voldemort and Hermione's tactics toward liberation, first defining the concept of institutional power is necessary. Based primarily in the research and works of Antonio Gramsci, institutional power can be defined as "the government; the churches; the corporation; the capitol ... the locus of subjugation and relinquishment" (Giroux, 1999). These loci can appear to be stagnant and immovable, but history has taught that even the most established and systematic institutions can be annihilated, or at least addressed and fought against (i.e. Hitler's reign in Germany, racism and homophobia throughout the history of America). According to Jiborn (2006), the mere existence of institutional power, whether in an entire community or simply a smaller institution, has the potential to—and often does—engender the ability to use coercive force, which entails the "enactment of violence on the behalf of the state" (17). Coercive force is a direct result of the institution because established regimes must defend their power or, ultimately, they will lose it. Utilizing coercive force keeps citizens of an institution bound by fear of physical retribution, and therefore unable to react violently. This is evidenced throughout literature pertaining to organization, oppression and liberation (Biko, 1978; Landwehr, 2010; Woodson, 1933). Steven Biko, the South African social activist, states that "the most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed ... this control over another's mind is established through routine physical and psychological attacks [force]" (77); one's control over the oppressed mind's leads to the ability to maintain domination. The effect is cyclical, and has been witnessed throughout history (Landwehr). Woodson establishes, in his 1933 analysis, an argument pertaining to controlling the mind of the oppressed that leads directly into the use of violent force to maintain that power:

> Starting out after the Civil War, the opponents of freedom and social justice ... made [slaves] to feel that he had always been a failure ... [and that] using violence perpetuates these beliefs, and proves as a most effective method to maintaining control [84–85].

Indeed, the range of years in which these works by Woodson, Biko and Landwehr were published is indicative of the propensity for institutionalized power to invoke coercive violence as a means of exercising the oppressors' regime. Through these references to past wars and contemporary conflicts concerning the use of mind control and using violence as a method of maintaining control, the use of force on oppressed peoples throughout history becomes evident. It is this enactment of violence against oppressed peoples that secures the oppressors' systems of power. Biko further states that throughout the Civil War, and primarily in slave plantations and areas where blatant and violent displays of racism against blacks was not only accepted, but encouraged, violent acts served two primary purposes: To continuously reaffirm the position of the subordinate, and to further perpetuate the fear that drives the institution (Hardin, 1995).

Established power encourages the use of force to maintain the regime, thus, it is an appropriate lens by which to begin to understand Voldemort's ability to maintain power over the Wizarding world. Though Hermione casts the first jinx in the entire series, and is sometimes referred to by friends as being "scary," she is not a violent fighter, nor does she believe in the perpetuation of violence to prolong an established regime. The violence behind the institution's use of coercive force is not necessarily enacted by Hermione herself. Rather, Harry is the fighter, and it is Harry, through the use of his force, that eventually destroys the tyrannical Dark Lord. However, as previously stated, Harry's victory in vanquishing Voldemort would not have been possible without Hermione's great ability to organize.

Coordination Theory

As a theory that transcends numerous academic disciplines, coordination theory is characterized by a high level of validity and usefulness in conducting textual analysis. For the purposes of analyzing Rowling's texts, employing coordination theory from a communication, philosophical, and political standpoint is critical. This then can be used to further a discussion of institutional power. In addition, coordination theory can be explicitly linked to Voldemort's regime and Hermione's attempt at establishing a liberation front against the Death Eaters.

Coordination theory, when addressed by political and philosophical theorists Hardin, Heath, and Rosen (1995), has three primary premises:

1. The ruling elite of an established institution of power possesses the resources (however minimal) to suppress any minority of would-be revolutionaries; it has greater coordinated power than any subversive minority is likely to have;

2. The oppressed majority is composed of predominantly prudential and rational individuals who continue to live in their enslavement due directly to a lack of their own coordination or organization;

3. Using sound organizational strategies, a minority can become the majority. Similarly, a majority can become the minority [4].

According to Watts, Abdul-Adil, Griffith and Wilson (1996), oppression is defined: "As a process, we define oppression as the unjust exercise of power and the control of ideas and coveted resources in a way that produces and sustains social inequality" (133). This definition implies that through the united effort of the oppressors, the marginalized minorities lose their resources to obtain any level of equality. Oppressors must continuously *practice* and prove their dominance over subordinate groups in order to retain the minorities' fear of rebelling. Through practicing power, dominating institutions remain in total control, and by using sound organization, oppressive parties can take control of all true and perceived resources, thereby exercising dominance over others. Thus, coordination theory points to the ability to enact both physical and psychological models of oppression over groups; this ability can be used by any parties with sufficient organization to turn a minority into a majority (Vanderschraaf, 2001).

Can those who are subjugated by oppressors that are utilizing coordination theory rally for and achieve equality by utilization of the same methods? According to the final tenet of coordination theory, majorities can become minorities, and vice-versa (Hardin, 1995). Given this premise, an established minority has, through organization and coordination, the ability to turn the tables on the majority, as seen in Table 1. Malone and Crowston (1999) state that, when coordination theory is applied across disciplines and in a variety of contexts, a cyclical model is formed and clearly depicted. The process of a minor figure overtaking a dominating variable is consistent throughout the sciences, and is, therefore, clearly applicable to human circumstances.

Table 1

Voldemort

1. (Before *SS* and recommencing as of *OotP*) Voldemort and the Death Eaters possess the resources to suppress any of the minority and any would-be revolutionaries; Voldemort and the Death Eaters have greater coordinated power than the Order or members of the anti–Voldemort movement are likely to have;

2. The Order and members of the anti–Voldemort movement are composed of predominantly prudential and rational individuals who continue to live in their enslavement due directly to a lack of their own coordination or organization;

3. Using sound organizational strategies, Voldemort and the Death Eaters were able to become the majority (overtaking the Ministry of Magic, the murder of Dumbledore,

members of the Order, etc.).

Hermione

1. (Occurring primarily during the events of *GoF* through *DH*) Hermione recognizes she has the resources necessary to liberate herself, the Order, and other members of the anti–Voldemort movement (the minority); she begins to establish a greater coordinated power to accomplish liberation;

2. Hermione realizes that Voldemort and the Death Eaters are comprised of predominately prudential and rational individuals who continue to be in power due to their sound organization;

3. Hermione becomes aware, and becomes the proponent of creating an anti–Voldemort movement of established organization and coordination to take on Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

Tenets of coordination theory defined and applied to Voldemort and Hermione's context throughout the Potter novels.

Implications of Power, Coercive Force, and Coordination

As previously noted, institutional power often leads to the use of coercive force to maintain that power. This power and force are a direct result of a well-organized regime. The purpose of using power, force, and organization is to prevent the oppressors from becoming the oppressed, and to turn a majority (or potential majority) into the minority. With minorities intact, and with an institution of violent power flourishing, the uses of power and dominance continue to reign (Jiborn, 2006). In *Potter*, this violent system works in conjunction primarily with Voldemort's reign over the Wizarding world, and is witnessed throughout the *Potter* novels. Hermione also utilizes this system, but in efforts to dismantle Voldemort's institution of power; she uses the system to apprehend the Death Eaters and Voldemort, and remove their institutionalized power.

To clearly align the implications of coordination theory with the goals of this analysis, and to illustrate the logic and methodological approach to this study, the tenets of this

theory are applied in Table 1.

Applying the understanding of institutionalized power, coercive force, and coordination theory to the *Harry Potter* novels, it can be deduced that:

1. In order to overcome Voldemort and the Death Eaters, Hermione becomes a highly organized liberator; if Voldemort's institutional power is removed, then he and his Death Eaters lose the ability to be oppressors.

2. With Hermione's organization and coordination, she is responsible for overcoming the oppressive majority.

Therefore, Voldemort and Hermione Granger are true equals. Using their methods of organization, both Voldemort and Hermione oppress and liberate the Wizarding World respectively. In the end, it is Hermione—*not* Harry—who truly paves the way toward freedom for all of Wizard-kind.

Analysis: Lord Voldemort

As the central antagonist of the series, Lord Voldemort is a symbol of not only evil and domination, but of a cunning, despotic organizer. The Dark Lord goes from most feared sorcerer in the entire world to "less than the meanest ghost" (*GoF*, 653), and back into a position of supremacy and fear. Voldemort did not accomplish this without a methodical strategy and means by which to carry out his plans. Though he claims not to rely on the assistance of others, and despises the idea of being thought of as anything but solitary, Voldemort relies on his loyal followers more than is ever conveyed through dialogue. Indeed, the Dark Lord's tyranny and institutionalized power could not have even occurred without his Death Eaters. However, it is through Voldemort's own planning, using very limited resources, that he manages to reinstitute his control over the Wizarding world. Furthermore, his efforts lead toward government-issued commissions of oppression, which enhance Voldemort and his Death Eaters' ability to establish governance and fear among the rest of the Wizarding world. In the span of three years, Voldemort manages to turn the majority into a minority. This section discusses how he utilizes coordination to accomplish this feat.

Voldemort and the Death Eaters

When Harry and Dumbledore are exploring the young Tom Riddle and Voldemort in *HBP*, one of the most illuminating recollections comes from the headmaster himself. Having learned earlier about Voldemort's desire to become a teacher at Hogwarts, Harry views a sinisterly transfigured Tom Riddle's new attempt at claiming a position amongst the school's teaching staff. Unfortunately for Voldemort, Dumbledore now resides as headmaster, and, having always had a deeper insight into Riddle's true nature, the headmaster happens to know more about the reasons behind why he desires a position than the dark wizard had originally anticipated. When Voldemort requests a teaching post at Hogwarts, Dumbledore asks, "If I were to go to the Hog's Head tonight, I would find a group of [Death Eaters]? Devoted friends indeed, to travel this far with you ... to wish you luck" (*HBP*, 444–445)

Though it is consistently reiterated throughout the texts that Voldemort prefers to act alone, his reliance on his servant cannot be denied or overlooked. Voldemort himself prefers to overlook the idea that he relies even remotely upon others, as he perceives that concept to be "intolerable" (*HBP*, 502). However, as witnessed in this conversation between Dumbledore and Voldemort, there happens to be a certain amount of reliance between Voldemort and his followers. The mere fact that his servants accompanied Voldemort to the Hog's Head indicates a certain amount of companionship. Rowling's aim at revealing this seems to be two-fold. First, it is to reveal the hypocrisy that defines Voldemort. Most notable of all these hypocritical instances is when Voldemort displays his violent persistence toward a "purified" race of Wizards, seeming to overlook the fact that he, himself, is a half-blood. In addition to revealing Voldemort's Hitler-like rejection of his own bloodline, Rowling's aim is to reveal the fact that Voldemort denies his reliance on others, though the Dark Lord clearly has depended on the support of several individuals throughout the course of his life. It is this reliance on others that eventually boosts Voldemort into institutionalized power over the wizarding world; not solely his individual efforts.

In the above passage, the Trio sees a sense of codependency for the first time in Voldemort's past. Though the significance of the Death Eaters in the Hog's Head is never truly revealed, Hermione, Harry and Ron can safely assume that is was for some show of support, however small. This instance is the primary establishment of Voldemort as the head of an organization, and despite the Dark Lord's rejection of any kind of companionships throughout his life being the reason for his eventually reign of power, Rowling's inclusion of this passage indicates otherwise. What the Trio witness

here is the beginning of Voldemort's attempts as coordinating his establishment of power.

Right after Voldemort's resurrection in *GoF*, he commences what Fluxman (2005) refers to as an "immediate rally" or beginnings of a tight organization that foreshadows impending attempts at assuming power over others (10). It is highly significant that even when Voldemort was very nearly powerless, and though he obviously had to rely on the attention and servitude of others (Quirrel for a vessel; Nagini for nourishment; Wormtail as caretaker), he remained a locus of power over his subordinates. He continued to organize even in his diminished state, and coordinated fluidly. Even after his servant severs his hand in an effort to help his master regain power, Voldemort passes by Wormtail's writhing body with indifference; Wormtail had "served his purpose" (*GoF*, 644–645). Then, without missing a beat, Voldemort begins attempting to rebuild his power over the wizarding world. Literally seconds after the Dark Lord rises again, he summons his Death Eaters and embarks on the quest of obtaining as much power as he can through utilizing tenets of coordination theory. Truly, Voldemort is a master of the use of coordination to manipulate his means, and nothing makes this plainer than his monologue about dangerous magical creatures to his Death Eaters soon after his revival: "Dementors will join us ... they are our natural allies ... we will recall the banished giants ... I shall have all my devoted servants return to me" (*GoF*, 651).

Voldemort understands that in order to regain control of dominating populous, using coercive force is necessary. Though he does not explicitly state it in this passage, the implications of dementors being the Death Eaters' natural allies along with recalling banished giants (who are discussed in depth as being notoriously savage and rogue) indicate that Voldemort intends to use devastation and coercive tactics to regain power. The very nature of Voldemort alludes to this, and though his attempts at re-establishing his superiority are sometimes more covert, the Dark Lord is known for murdering innumerable people and using violence as a means to achieving his goals. Again, though Voldemort prides himself in secret as a loner and solitary achiever of power, it is only through his ability to build armies and institute control over followers that he ever had power in the first place, and continues to seek it mere seconds after returning to his regular form. Voldemort's Death Eaters, though very few, prove to be well-connected in the Wizarding world—a resource Voldemort maximizes on. This is especially prevalent when Voldemort addresses his Death Eaters after returning to power, including Lucius Malfoy, who [has] not renounced the old ways, though to the world [Lucius] presents a respectable face ... [and is] still ready to take the lead in a sport of Muggle-torture" (*GoF*, 650).

Voldemort's instant utilization of his Death Eaters' connections within the Ministry of Magic and other key networks in the Wizarding world permits him access to terrains

otherwise inaccessible. It is fair to say that without his Death Eaters' resources, Voldemort would have had a considerably more difficult time obtaining power so quickly after being returned to his body. However, Voldemort himself is the key organizer, immediately putting his available resources to use, and, especially having previously organized his return to power by positioning Barty Crouch Jr. at Hogwarts, Voldemort himself was a primary reason for his own return to power. Using his cunning and manipulation, the Dark Lord brings about his own resurrection, and is capable of coordinating this entire comeback with limited resources. Additionally, the Dark Mark being branded into the forearms of his most devoted followers permits him to establish instant communication with his Death Eaters. This affords Voldemort the ability to instantly communicate and coordinate with his subordinates, permitting him to carry out plans almost instantaneously.

Magic Is Might: The Muggle-Born Registration Commission

Voldemort manages to institute dominance over the Wizarding world, and establishes highly symbolic efforts to diminish the majority. Recalling the Nazi regime's mandate for every Jew to register themselves, Voldemort's Muggle Born Registration Commission demands that all wizards and witches must register their bloodline to be examined for its so-called "purity." It should be noted that though Voldemort does not necessarily issue the commission in person, it is through his covert dominance in the Ministry that the regime is ultimately established. Consequentially, innumerable members of the community are brought in for questioning, and are thrown into Azkaban Prison, or else given straight to the dementors. This commission coupled with Voldemort's domination of the Ministry marks a highly ef-fective organizational strategy by the oppressor to prevent any sort of liberation.

The mere fact that Voldemort has managed to overtake the Ministry of Magic—the hub of the Wizarding world—and use it in an effort to establish his control and continual dominance over Muggles and half-bloods demonstrates that the Dark Lord was able to again utilize his limited resources to his benefit. At the beginning of DH, Voldemort reveals his plans to overthrow the already shaky Ministry by murdering Scrimgeour and assuming a "behind the scenes" role as the new leader. This is accomplished by his Ministry-employed Death Eaters' curses and manipulations.

By taking advantage of his Death Eaters' professions, Voldemort is able to begin utilizing their occupations to his advantage. Yaxley, as a newly-instated member of the Ministry, is ideal in carrying out his master's wishes. With what readers can assume to be Voldemort's direction, Yaxley assumes control over Thicknesse, who, upon the

imminent death of Rufus Scrimgeour, is to assume the Minister of Magic position. Again, through Voldemort's coordination, and understanding that he can use his limited resources to great benefit, he manages to destabilize the Ministry and gain total control. By controlling the Ministry, Voldemort establishes control over the government, which possesses the ability to control the masses, subjugate minorities, and bolsters the power of Voldemort himself. In addition to Voldemort's powerful networks, there are many symbolic changes that demonstrate his regime.

The replacement of the Fountain of Magical Brethren symbolizes Voldemort's ability to turn the majority into the minority. In *DH*, what was once an already farfetched depiction of a bold witch and wizard being adored by a house-elf, goblin, and centaur has been replaced by a new rendering, with "mounds of carved humans ... all with rather stupid, ugly faced, twisted and pressed together to support the weight of ... wizards" (*DH*, 242).

The Trio witness the true destabilization of the original order (albeit a subliminally prejudice one) and its evolution into a regime by Lord Voldemort. Brainless, thoughtless Muggles (and possibly half-bloods) struggle to handle the immense size, ability, and, above all other attributes, *dominance* of the pure-blood witch and wizard. The Muggles (and half-bloods) are slowly being crushed by the power of the mighty pure-blood witch and wizard. The words MAGIC IS MIGHT serve as a reminder to all Ministry workers entering or exiting the Ministry that only those who can wield magic are the most powerful, and everyone underneath are subservient. As Mullany (2004) indicates, a phrase or slogan can be utilized to establish control and fear to further oppress groups. Additionally, the slogan can serve as a reminder to the oppressors to continue their efforts of oppression. Clearly, Voldemort's efforts have been carefully crafted in an effort to maintain his control over the Wizarding world.

Through his ability to rally, organize and delegate specific tasks, and utilize the occupation of his Death Eaters to carry out his formulations and intentions, Voldemort succeeds as an extremely capable coordinator. His ability to use coordination theory is what provides him with the power and ability to assume control over the Wizarding world. Throughout *GoF*, *OotP*, *HBP* and *DH*, Voldemort manages to return to full strength, take control of the dementors and free his most loyal servants from Azkaban, raid the Ministry of Magic, coordinate an attack on Hogwarts that results in the death of Albus Dumbledore, and, eventually, enter Hogwarts himself for the final battle. In the midst of these events lies Voldemort's comprehension of the power of coordinating, and, even in his seemingly solo quest to obtain the most coveted and dangerous Hallow of all, the Dark Lord appears to continually have the upper hand.

However, the Trio has coordinated plans of their own, and, as "the cleverest witch in her year" (*PoA*, 346), Hermione manages to clear the way for Harry to finally take on Voldemort, and free the world from the Dark Lord's reign.

Analysis: Hermione

Rowling has stated that "[her] feminist conscience is saved by Hermione, who's the brightest character. I love Hermione as a character. She's kind of a caricature of me when I was younger" (January 2001). Perhaps because of Rowling's identification with her, Hermione is characterized as the "brains" of the Trio, and she continues to prove herself as the most formidable of the three primary protagonists in Rowling's work. Hermione serves as the organizer of the group, at witnessed in numerous circumstances throughout the series. Though Harry is entrusted by Dumbledore to lead the Trio in their hunt for the Horcruxes, Hermione is the one who provides the necessary means of seeking them out, and, ultimately, surviving the entire quest in *DH*. Through Hermione's attention to oppressed groups, and her knowledge obtained through trying to liberate them, she is able to understand methods with which to relinquish Voldemort's command. However, understanding where Hermione's passion for liberation was derived from is pertinent when considering her role as Voldemort's true opposite.

Incentive for Liberation

Vanderschraaf (2001) asserts that one's desire to liberate and be free is a direct result of experiencing oppression. Throughout history, those who have fought against oppressive institutions are members of the oppressed minority, and also directly exhibit oppressive actions throughout their lives. If Martin Luther King or Malcolm X had not personally been a victim of racial slurs and hate, where their incentives to fight for the liberation of African Americans have emerged? Considering where Hermione draws her incentive to fight against oppression and construct organizations to fight against dominating belief systems in the Wizarding world are crucial to understanding why Hermione is such an accomplished coordinator.

One of the primary instances where the Trio is exposed to discrimination at Hogwarts is through the label, *Mudblood*. This term, which is depicted as being equivalent to any modern-day racial or homophobic slur, is used periodically throughout Rowling's works by those who advocate for the subjugation of half-bloods. In *CoS*, Malfoy calls a

bewildered Hermione a Mudblood when she points out the Malfoy had to "buy his way" onto the Slytherin Quidditch team (*CoS*, 112). Malfoy's implication that Mudbloods are "filthy" is that anyone of Muggle-blood descent is second-class; unworthy of being a true witch or wizard. Though at this point in the series, the concept of being a half-blood has not been thoroughly explored, labeling Hermione as "filthy" begins the reader's understanding that she *can* be considered beneath others. The fact that she can, and often is (particularly by Slytherins in the early books, and then by Voldemort's Ministry in the later books) viewed by the oppressors as a second-class citizen provides Hermione with an incentive to fight for her own equality. As the years progress, the evidence of a discriminatory Wizarding world becomes increasingly apparent, again with the Malfoys, at the Quidditch World Cup: "Harry knew exactly what was making Mr. Malfoy's lip curl ... they considered anyone of Muggle descent, like Hermione, second-class" (*GoF*, 101–102).

Throughout her first years at Hogwarts, Hermione's experiences with discrimination fuel her desire to become an organized liberator. Instead of embodying the label *Mudblood*, Hermione fights against negative associations and asserts herself as the pivotal player in the fight against Voldemort. Because of her experiences being discriminated against, she begins to observe systems of oppression around her. According to Landwehr (2010), those who are victims to systematic oppression are more likely to observe (though not necessary advocate against) other systems of oppression in the world around them. Therefore, Hermione appears to be the only witch or wizard in her year to witness the enslavement of house-elves. Additionally, she is extra sensitive to Voldemort's reign, and designs systems to fight back. In *OotP*, after Dumbledore and Voldemort face-off in the Ministry, the Headmaster illuminates the hypocrisy of the then-design of the Fountain of Magical Brethren, fueling Hermione's argument that systems of oppression exist against magical creatures. The fountain consisted of a stoic wizard and witch being admired by a centaur, goblin, and house-elf. After Sirius is murdered, Dumbledore tells Harry that "indifference and neglect [of house-elves] often do much more damage than outright dislike," which ultimately lead to Kreacher's betrayal and Sirius's death (*OotP*, 833–834).

In this discussion with Harry, Dumbledore reveals what Hermione begins fighting for in *GoF* with S.P.E.W. and in *OotP* with the D.A. The mistreatment of magical creatures has led to a division that Dumbledore is aware of, and encourages Harry to better comprehend. Hermione, however, begins perceiving these systems, and establishes S.P.E.W. and the D.A.

S.P.E.W. and the D.A.: Hermione's Organizations

Armed with the drive to free the Wizarding world from the clutches of Voldemort, Hermione is the primary reason why the Dark Lord's regime disintegrates. Her abilities to organize and coordinate are acknowledged by Dumbledore, who foresees the importance of Hermione's abilities and insights, and describes this foresight after Harry asks about the lure of the Deathly Hallows compared to the destruction of Horcruxes: "I'm afraid I counted on Miss Granger to slow you up ... I was afraid that your hot head might dominate your good heart" (*DH*, 720–721).

Dumbledore understands the importance of Hermione's abilities, and reveals to Harry, directly after he sacrifices himself to save the lives of his friends, that Harry's "hot head" would be his downfall. Rowling has even stated that Harry's grandest flaw is his occasional arrogance. Without Hermione's ability to keep Harry on-track and in pursuit of the Horcruxes, everything the Trio had planned—all of the time they had spent searching for and destroying those elusive fragments of Voldemort's soul—would have been for nothing. Dumbledore's elaboration about the true "master of death" implies Hermione's comprehension of this concept (which was even lost on Dumbledore for many years), and further implies that she is the true opposite of Lord Voldemort.

During her fourth year at Hogwarts, Hermione begins to research and fight for the rights of house-elves. She alone is able to comprehend that house-elves, though seeming to enjoy being subservient to wizards, are brainwashed (sometimes violently) into being their slaves. In fact, the brainwashing and abuse of house-elves is so prominent that house-elves are in magical families for many generations; house-elves identify by their attachment to their masters. As Biko indicates, slavery that lasts numerous generations has slaves that have never known freedom, and therefore identify solely as an object (1933). Hermione establishes a rally against the enslavement of house-elves (S.P.E.W.), and begins her role as a proponent of equal rights among all magical persons and creatures. Hermione first learns of house-elves working at Hogwarts during the first feast of the term, and is horrorstruck when she finds out they are not paid wages, and immediately labels the house-elves as "slave labor" (*GoF*, 182).

Hermione's ignorance of house-elves in Hogwarts is converse to the general mindset among wizards, who believe that an invisible house-elf is a good house-elf. The mere fact that these creatures, who clean, cook, and serve witches and wizards are marked as "good" when they are invisible is highly significant. Hermione recognizes that wizards have been enslaving and brainwashing house-elves for years, and that these magical creatures have been pushed into a minority position because of years and years of being valued as objects, existing only to do a wizard's bidding. Hermione's disgust at finding out that house-elves don't receive pay, pensions, or sick leave speaks to a tenet of coordination theory: In Rowling's work, house-elves, though depicted as loyal to their masters, are brainwashed and seldom written as "rational." Though Dobby, perhaps the

most sensible and rational of all the house-elves readers witness in the series, obtains pay for his work and uses his own magic against his old enslavers (the Malfoys), he can hardly be described as level-headed. In accordance with the second tenet of the theory, minorities consist of primarily rational individuals, who lack coordination and organization skills (or the ability to coordinate or organize). Hermione, therefore, recognizes that wizards are the only ones who are able to relinquish their hold over house-elves, and commences S.P.E.W. to inform her peers at Hogwarts about the potential dangers of continuing this enslavement; she takes on the role as the rational proponent for their freedom.

However, James (2011) argues that Hermione is wrong to leading a fight for the rights of house-elves. James indicates that Hermione's attempts at freeing house-elves from Wizard's enslavement is overstepping her bounds as an ally; that Hermione, as a human, has no right to be fighting for the rights of another type of being. James states that "had Dobby started S.P.E.W. and Hermione supported it, [Hermione's fight to liberate house-elves] would not be a problem—but Dobby's voice and contributions seem to matter little to Hermione except as an example of how some elves do want freedom." In addition, James postulates that "a movement for the advancement of an oppressed class must be centered on and led by members of the oppressed class." The flaw in this argument is that house-elves have been *conditioned* by Wizards to behave the way they do: "'Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards, Harry" (*OotP*, 834).

Because these oppressed groups—primarily house-elves—have been made by wizards, the problem with this system of oppression cannot be immediately solved by a member of the oppressed. The liberation of house-elves needs to be at the very least initiated by a member of the oppressors, something Dumbeldore and Hermione understand and consistently warn others about throughout the series.

Hermione illuminates the price oppressors pay for enslavement when she tells Harry that "Sirius was horrible to Kreacher ... I've said all along that wizards would pay for how they treat house-elves ... Voldemort did ... and so did Sirius" (*DH*, 198). Though the primary exposure of house-elf liberation comes from Harry in *CoS*, it is Hermione that takes the lead role in educating herself about the prices witches and wizards pay for enslavement. Harry frees Dobby from his servitude, but he does not do this for the benefit of *all* house-elves. In *GoF*, when Harry meets Winky, he appears to be quite oblivious to her role as a slave; in *CoS*, he sees only the negative, unfair treatment of Dobby as a friend. Hermione, on the other hand, begins to observe that the treatment of house-elves is not only individual in nature, but is a more universal issue. Therefore, it is Hermione who begins coordinating efforts toward the freedom of magical creatures. Her coordination of a society that encourages the freedom of house-elves is precisely the opposite of what Voldemort endorses. Throughout the novels, Hermione continues to

evolve as an organizer of a liberation front, and continues to shed light on the negative ramifications of enslavement. In addition to organizing S.P.E.W., Hermione is also the sole proponent for Harry to form Dumbledore's Army in *OotP*.

Though Harry is given the title as "leader" of the D.A., Hermione conceives the idea of forming an alliance of students to learn defensive spells. She proposes the idea to Harry, who needs some coaxing before giving the matter some serious consideration, but seems bolstered after Hermione says "I really think you ought to teach anyone [defense against the dark arts] who wants to learn ... we're talking about defending ourselves against V-Voldemort" (*OotP*, 331–332).

Hermione recognizes that as Voldemort continues to gain power, the wider Wizarding community will lose power. This realization is the initiative behind forming the D.A. She is able to take the limited amount of resources available to her and use them to begin forming an anti–Voldemort movement. In accordance with coordination theory, a skilled coordinator is able to utilize limited resources to overthrow any (potential) oppressor (Jiborn, 2006). Hermione banks on Harry's instructional abilities, the support of Ron, and, after the D.A. is officially established, the efforts of its members to maintain an organization that will, when the time comes in *DH*, work against Voldemort's Death Eaters. Hermione, like Voldemort, understands the power of having an organized society. In a sense, the D.A. serves as a new-age Order of the Phoenix. Hermione even gives members fake Galleons that indicate the time and location of the next meeting, an idea derived directly from Voldemort's Death Eater tattoos.

Like Voldemort, Hermione maximizes on her resources in order to coordinate against her oppressors. Hermione alone is able to use her knowledge and abilities to create a method of communication between members of the D.A. Though Harry is the leader, he would not be able to soundly organize meetings without the aid of Hermione. Originally established by Dumbledore during Voldemort's first reign over the Wizarding world, the Order of the Phoenix served as a rallying point for freedom from oppression. Hermione establishes the D.A., which serves as the Hogwarts anti–Voldemort society.

Though Harry is characterized by being the central hero to the story, and is depicted on the covers of all the books, movie posters, and merchandise as the primary protagonist, he would not have been able to be a successful wizard without Hermione's aid. Her ability to organize and coordinate against the enemy is the primary reason Harry is finally able to face-off with Voldemort. Throughout *DH*, Hermione consistently demonstrates her abilities as a scholar and accomplished witch, saving the lives of Harry and Ron numerous times. Using her intellect and sheer desire to assist oppressed groups, Hermione paves the way to the inevitable confrontation with Voldemort, and, like Dumbledore before her, reveals the imperfections of a magical world. Therefore,

Hermione, with her keen observation of an oppressive magical society and ability to organize and coordinate, plays the crucial role in bringing down the regime of Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters.

Research Implications, Limitations and Conclusion

Rowling's works cannot be taken at face-value. Each character and plot line are critiques of societal norms and world circumstance. Coordination theory provides a lens with which to analyze the Potterverse, and reveals that systems of oppression are established in Rowling's work. These systems are maintained by using coercive force as a method of enslavement, and are defeated by minorities with intellect and knowledge about the power of sound organization. A thorough understanding of coordination theory provides both Voldemort and Hermione with the ability to overtake the established majority, which is depicted throughout the primary story arc. The Death Eaters and the Order of the Phoenix/Dumbledore's Army alternate being the minority and the majority. This shifting of power is mirrored throughout history and in contemporary society. By understanding how coordination can overcome any reigning majority, this research implies that the conflict between Voldemort and Hermione transcends Rowling's pages and enters the real world. In fact, organizations have been established in accordance with Rowling's messages of equal rights and liberation. The Harry Potter Alliance (thehpalliance.org) is a website devoted to educating readers about systems of oppression in the real world, and methods in which people can volunteer to help. Their theme is derived from one of Rowling's central messages, that the greatest weapon one can have against hate, evil and tyranny is love. These types of organizations utilize coordination theory in the real world, with aims and goals similar to Hermione's; this organization reflects Hermione's ambition to "do some good in the world" (*DH*, 124).

Both Hermione and Voldemort's use of the theory point to more effective methods of overcoming dominating majorities. Effective communication strategies are pertinent to overcoming great obstacles, both in relationships and in grander social schemas. Additionally, being able to competently delegate tasks and assignments when working in groups allows for a more competent completion of tasks, and contributes more successfully to the goals of the entire organization. Both Hermione and Voldemort (in their respective ways) provide guidance to those around them, and often encourage (though, in Voldemort's case, violently) their comrades to fight tirelessly in order to achieve their aims, always through a tightly organized regimen. These tactics employed by both characters can be implemented by families, organizational hierarchies and world leaders. The use of coordination theory is witnessed in the news every day,

particularly in light of the death of Osama Bin Laden. Without sound organizational strategies and tireless efforts to bring down the terrorist, Bin Laden would never have been located and assassinated by American troops. Furthermore, Bin Laden's attacks on the World Trade Centers and Pentagon would not have been (regrettably) as successful without his own ability to rally and organize. Clearly, the uses of coordination theory and implications from the *Potter* series are witnessed in a vast variety of contexts throughout the world. However, given these many implications, there are some limitations in the research.

Research regarding coordination theory primarily resides in the realm of political science, regarding power structures and political regimes, both contemporary and historical (Fluxman, 2004). Applying coordination theory to Rowling's works is a somewhat intuitive process, but could have been further explored if the theory were utilized in more previously conducted scholarly inquiry. Communication scholarship could benefit immensely from the implementation of coordination theory into more research studies. Though coordination theory can be employed across disciplines and used to analyze a variety of texts, artifacts, and contexts, more demonstrations of how the theory can be applied to a deep reading textual analysis could have provided a better insight for the researcher. These limitations reveal areas for future research regarding *Potter* and coordination theory.

Further research regarding the use of coordination theory in the Potterverse is crucial. Discovering new ways in which organizational strategies impact the decisions and tactics of characters in the series would shed more insight into the intricate, applicable world of relationships Rowling has created. In addition, utilizing coordination theory in an exploration of dynamics between characters as they progress through the novels would assist in bolstering the applicability and value of the theory. This research study poses several new questions worthy of exploration, and helps shed insight into why Hermione is such a key contributor to the trio. Continual examination of Hermione Granger's role in the Trio and entire *Potter* series will continue to provide an insight into this fascinating character's motives and actions.

One of the posters for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* film (Figure 1) depicts profile views of Harry and Voldemort, facing each other. Their eyes are narrowed in a combination of contempt and determination, and their faces are battle-scarred and dirty. The implication could not be clearer, even to those who have not read the series: the final showdown will take place in this film, between the two "faces" of good and evil; the two "sides."

Indeed, the theatrical trailer reveals what can only be an extended fight scene between Harry and Voldemort, in an effort to demonstrate the epic nature of the final calamity.

The general public accepts this as the only natural depiction of the final part in the eight films: Harry Potter, the proponent of good, versus Voldemort, the face of evil. The purpose of the image is to reveal the two opposites of the franchise. However, if the image endeavors to reveal the two "opposites" of the series, in accordance with this research, the image on the movie poster should have had Hermione's profile instead of Harry's.

Figure 1: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2* movie poster (http://www.moviesdx.com/harry-potter-voldemort-face-off-deathly-hallows-part-2-poster).

Throughout the books, Voldemort maximizes his resources to overcome the Wizarding world, and exercises institutional power over the majority. He manages to overtake the majority with his ability to soundly organize and use the network of his followers. Hermione suffers from discrimination due to her half-blood status, observes the trials and suffrage of other oppressed minorities, and learns to coordinate against the enemy. By establishing organizations for the promotion of minority welfare, and arranging Dumbledore's Army, she is able to lead the Trio to victory. She promotes the overthrow of Voldemort's regime through her passion for enacting change, and acknowledging Harry's ability to fight coercively. Therefore, there can be no doubt that, in many ways, Hermione Granger is the *true* Chosen One.

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